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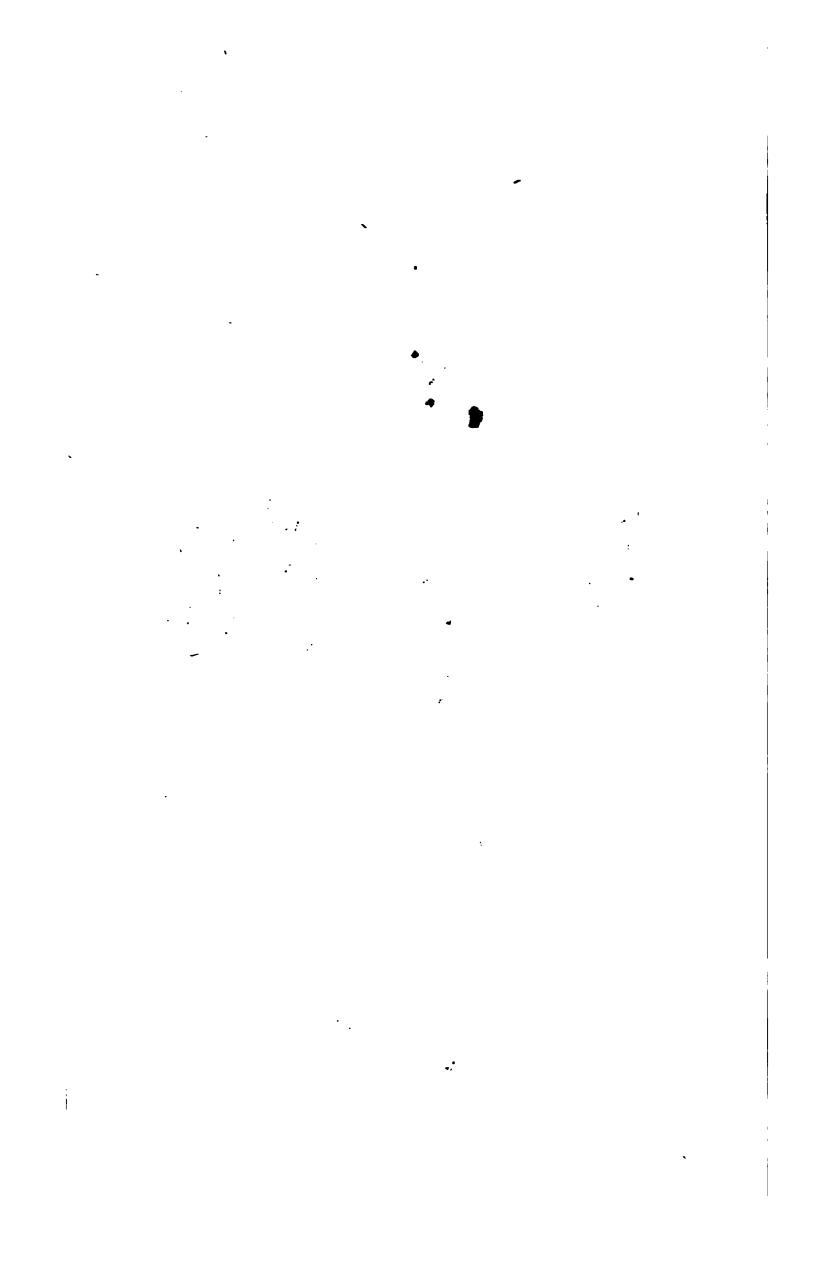
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THE OLD PATHS:

OR,

Lectures on the Protestant Faith.

BY THE



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ERRATA.

"JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH."—Page 21, for lines 8, 9, 10, 11, substitute the following: of itself, the second by itself valueless. Baptism, however, is a sign or seal: on God's side, a seal to His promises, to those who believe; on man's side, a visible sign and outward profession (at

"THE LORD'S SUPPER."—Page 15, line 5, for *corpula* read *copula*.—Page 17, line 4 from bottom, for 20 read 21.

"SUPERSTITIOUS BONDAGE AND GOSPEL FREEDOM."—Page 16, line 1, for *met* read *met by*.

PREFACE.

THE Lectures comprised in this book were not originally intended for publication: they were delivered as instruction to a Protestant Educational class, with a view to giving distinct dogmatic teaching on the principal strongholds of the Christian Faith.

At the request of many who heard them they are set before the Public in the present form, with the hope that those who read them may be led to study the truths of Christ's religion for themselves, and so to be able to give "a reason of the hope that is in them."

The dangers and doubts of the present day cannot be met by merely exposing and confronting error. Falsehood must be overthrown by truth, scepticism by faith, ignorance by knowledge. All the denial of error and all the refutation of falsehood will not arrive at anything positive, at any *real personal* experience of truth. Highly as we love and value the word *Protes-*

tant, let us see to it that our religion means something more than mere *protesting*. The knowledge of Christ as our own Saviour will involve our keeping near Him, and honouring His word above all things. If we have "won Christ," we shall live in Him; if we keep close to Him, we shall not have the desire to stray from Him.

The object of this little book will be thoroughly answered if it leads any to search and try, what they themselves believe, by the standard of God's Word: not so much seeking into what others hold, as receiving from the Gospel, in all its simplicity, a *positive personal faith*.

J. H. R.

Malvern, 1873.

The Word of God the Only Rule of Faith.

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THE title given to this course of lectures sufficiently explains their subject and nature. Their subject, the Protestant faith in its integrity—true faith, as distinguished from unbelief on the one hand and misbelief on the other—Protestant faith, that which, itself Scriptural and Apostolical, the faith of Jesus Christ, protests against being spoiled through “philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

They are lectures, not discussions, education rather than controversy; and the object in view is to bring forward and state the truth itself, to give reasons for what we believe, and to state fundamental doctrines with all the power and clearness that God may vouchsafe to give us, rather than to assail those who, as we believe, do err from the faith.

The first step in lecturing on Faith must be to establish the Rule of Faith, and the subj^c

of our present lecture fixes this as being the Word of God and the Word of God *only*. Until this be established, we have no certain standard, and no ground on which to prove the other doctrines which are to be brought forward. Let us, then, calmly and prayerfully consider why we Protestants believe the Word of God to be the only Rule of Faith.

This I shall endeavour to lay before you under five points:—

I. The Word of God is *inspired*, and so permits no doubt.

II. The Word of God is *complete*, and so neither needs nor permits additions.

III. The Word of God is *sufficient*, and so needs no human interpretation.

IV. The Word of God is given to *all*, and so to be withheld from none.

V. The Word of God is *the revelation of Christ*, “in whom are hid *all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” and therefore anything not included in it must be spurious.

I. Our first business is to establish the inspiration of the Word of God, since, if once we accept it as the dictation of the Holy Ghost, it can admit of no doubt, and we can lawfully appeal to it in support of our other propositions.

Now we must bear in mind that if the Bible be not inspired, it is a forgery and a falsehood,

for it says of itself (2 Tim. iii. 16), "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." How, then, has God treated this book, which professes to be an inspired revelation of His will? He has *providentially protected* it in all ages; it is the only book that has never been lost; preserved during the captivity, and in all the dangers and persecutions of the Jewish nation; carried throughout the known world by their dispersion; now multiplied and circulated in the most marvellous manner. Would God have interfered for its preservation, and permitted its multiplication and reception throughout Christians of every race, if it had been the forgery which is its only alternative from being His own inspired Word?

Again, the Lord Jesus Christ, in the New Testament, testifies that the Old is what it professes to be, and therefore inspired. He quotes passages, points out fulfilled prophecy, recalls commandments, and mentions persons and facts as realities, in a way which proves the inspiration of the records to which He refers.

And, still further, God has in unnumbered cases used the written word to bring souls out of darkness into His marvellous light. History, ancient and modern, and many cases probably known to all present, unite in showing how God has used His word for the conversion of souls. And would He have used it thus, had it been

the forgery which it must be if anything but inspired? God's own treatment of His word is an argument for its inspiration which can never be overthrown.

Then, passing to internal evidence, follows the argument from *unity of design*.

We have at least thirty-one different writers, of very different periods and positions—from the ranks of kings, lawgivers, generals, seers, shepherds, scribes, publicans, courtiers, physicians, and fishermen—all differing in style, all showing forth the same scheme and plan in various stages, though in some cases thousands of years apart; all opposing themselves to man's own ideas and habits; all testifying of one Saviour, and agreeing in facts the most unlikely. Could this be if all were not inspired by one Spirit—the Holy Ghost. For instance, could Moses, Isaiah, and Micah, at such different times, have prophesied the birth of a Saviour of a *virgin*, and the Evangelists have recorded the actual fact, had not their words been written by inspiration of God?

From this point, we naturally find our next argument in the fulfilment of prophecy and the completion of types. As the latter will, probably, come before us in another form, it is only necessary now to draw your attention to the exposition of the Book of Leviticus, which we find in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but on the

former point we may get most material help. The numberless prophécies of our Lord, expressive of His various attributes, His life, death, and resurrection, are too well known to need much said about them and their fulfilment, but some other special points deserve special remark. The twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, containing the denunciations of captivity, sword, famine, desolation, and dispersion of the Jewish nation, has been literally fulfilled, so that its fulfilment has been recognised by the Jews themselves. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit, foretold in Joel ii., is brought before us in Acts ii., with every particular carried out; while the prophecy of Isaiah, naming Cyrus and his work 140 years before his birth, is another of the many proofs that "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Another very important proof of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, is the powerlessness of many of the authors to have written at all, if undirected by the Holy Ghost. Could Amos, the herdsman of Tekoa, have himself compiled his wonderful prophecy? Could St. Matthew, unaided by the Spirit of God, have written his touching, carefully-arranged, gospel narrative? Could St. John, from the nets on the shore of Gennesaret, if uninspired, have written those heart-searching and heart-satisfying truths with

which the books which bear his name abound? And yet these unlearned and ignorant men are the teachers of the world; and, to use the words of Bishop Wordsworth, "the greatest sages of this world, the Bacons and the Newtons, the Keplers and the Pascals, sit down as little children at the feet of St. Matthew and St. John."

One more proof of this portion of our subject shall suffice: it may be called the proof of *interpretation*. To the greatest scholar, the deepest thinker, the profoundest philosopher, the Bible, if read only by the light of his own intellect, is a sealed book; but to the humblest student of God's word—poor and untaught, it may be, or young and uninformed, but seeking the aid of God the Holy Ghost to enlighten the heart—its truths are poured forth with a clearness and distinctness which even experienced Christians cannot realise. Thus oftentimes the dying pauper teaches the clergyman; the child leads the parent to the discovery of truth before unknown; and the man of letters and thought finds that matters which are dark and hidden from him are clear to those far beneath him in the social and intellectual scale. The Holy Spirit is the only interpreter of the Word of God; and surely this fact shows that that word cannot be otherwise than inspired by the same Holy Ghost.

II. Our first point being, then, so far established as to show that the Word of God is inspired, and so permits no doubt, we have next to see that it is *complete*, and so neither needs nor permits any addition.

It is complete in its *scheme*. It is the revelation of God to man; and it professes to be the direction which leads man to eternal life. It begins with an account of man in his innocence, and, almost immediately, his fall: God's favour forfeited, and the curse brought by man's disobedience on him whom God created very good. Then follows at once a prophecy of the Saviour who alone could restore fallen man, and the idea of propitiation by a victim's death, introduced by the slaughter of the animals whose skins covered the shame of our first parents.

To enable man to see his need of a Saviour, then follows the Law, which expresses God's will, and says, "This do, and live." And the history following shows that *man cannot* do this, and so must die if left to himself; while every page of history, poetry, and prophecy, prepares for the coming of "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Then follows the Gospel: the good news of man's salvation in Christ Jesus; His blameless life, His teaching, His death, His victory over death, and His ascension with man's nature into heaven—the first-fruits from the dead.

But as man cannot of himself understand these deep truths, the Word of God next records the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and the inspired teaching of the Apostles, the founders of the Church, on the Rock Christ Jesus; while the whole winds up with a glorious account of what is in store for man who accepts it in Christ.

Thus the scheme of Scripture is complete and may be described thus: paradise lost—an atonement promised—prepared for—offered—preached—paradise regained and glorified.

The Word of God is also complete in *its structure*: each part has its corresponding part, and all, so to speak, fit in together. Thus the Old Testament, with its old covenant, its types, sacrifices, and prophecies, finds its completion in the New; where the new covenant absorbs the old, and the types and sacrifices all find their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. Nor can any one read the first two chapters of Genesis with the last two of Revelation, without noticing this completeness in a remarkable way. The heaven and earth, old and new, the river, the tree of life, the natural and spiritual marriage, the rest, “the curse,” the “no curse,” “the serpent the liar”—“the entrance of nothing that defileth, or maketh a lie”; these are all proofs of completeness of structure.

Then, again, how clearly we can trace the

same completeness throughout: in the history of God's chosen nation, applied as it is by St. Paul to the spiritual Israel; in the exact analogy between the types and the antitypes; in the bearings of its different parts on the one central point of all, the revelation of Jesus Christ. And the same completeness is borne out in the doctrinal portions; for no one part of a doctrine is ever stated without its application or counterpart. Faith is always followed by practice: Christ in the heart, carried out into Christ in the life.

Many other points might be mentioned in which the Word of God is complete: such as that it embraces all kinds of writing, corresponds with all the workings of the mind of man, and includes all methods of teaching; but it will be sufficient for our purpose if we establish its completeness as a Rule of Faith. It gives us the object of faith, points out its origin, nature, and working; and then having shown the application of faith to practical life, it does not leave the matter till it has brought us to where faith is lost in sight.

Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Perfect Man, the Redeemer, the Victor of death, the Sacrifice accepted, the Mediator, Advocate, and Judge, is shown forth in every aspect, by every means, as the object of faith throughout the book; and lest we should underrate the impor-

tance of faith, one thrilling sentence tells us that "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). As to the *origin* of faith we are told in Romans x. 17, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." As to its *nature*, our Lord's discourses are full of it, showing its power to remove doubts; its growth; and, in His miracles, its position as the link between man's wants and Christ's grace, and the instrument by which His grace and merit are accepted. The Epistles are distinct as to its *working*: St. Paul calling it in Gal. v. 6, "faith which works by love," and in Rom. xii. showing how the acceptance of the mercies of God, or, in other words, the knowledge that we are not our own, must lead us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, and to "glorify God with our bodies and with our spirits which are His." St. James, too, in the second chapter of his epistle shows that the existence of living faith can only be proved by works.

Nor are we left in doubt as to the *end* of faith. Our Lord says (John vi. 47), "He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life"; while St. Peter (I. i. 9) speaks of "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls"; and in the Revelation, where the state of the redeemed is brought before us, we find that faith is lost in sight, for (xxii. 4) "they shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads."

Surely, then, we must see the completeness of God's word as a rule of faith. What to believe in, how to believe, the nature, effects and final consequences of believing, are all clearly set forth; and, lest we should be tempted to add anything of our own, we are met by those remarkable words in Proverbs xxx. 6, "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."

III. The next point for our consideration is, that the Word of God is sufficient in itself, and therefore needs no human interpretation. This is the point on which the Protestant Church takes her stand; for Rome and Romish followers declare : *first*, that there are oral traditions which are required for the full understanding of the Rule of Faith; and *secondly*, that the Bible is so hard to be understood that it should not be independently read, but that its interpretation is committed to the Church.

Our proposition is, that Holy Scripture is not only complete in all the parts necessary for a Rule of Faith, but in itself sufficient, and therefore it requires no human interpretation or addition. This may be proved first *by the Scriptures themselves*.

Many passages may be quoted on this point, but it shall suffice to mention the most impor-

tant. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 29-31) gives a most important testimony on this point. The rich man in torment is seeking the means to save his five brethren, and asks that a living witness may be sent to awaken them. The reply is, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." "Nay, father Abraham," cries the lost soul, "but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent." Mark the reply, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." Here we have the law and the prophets declared sufficient, and so far sufficient that they would not be strengthened by the arguments of one risen from the dead. How much more, then, when the Gospel is added! Surely we must see the Word of God needs no interpretation.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, xv. 4, says, "That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope"; and more clearly still in II. Timothy iii. 15-17, "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What more

can we need? "Able to make thee wise unto salvation—perfect—thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The sufficiency of the Word of God is also proved by Holy Scripture in the *persons* to whom the apostolic epistles were addressed. They were not sent to one central infallible church whence they should be promulgated, and interpreted by authority, but to different small bodies, and even to individuals. If Holy Scripture were not alone sufficient, would sensual Corinth, would superstitious Galatia, would Gnostic Colosse have been intrusted with those important epistles unexplained? Or, omitting Timothy and Titus, would inspired epistles have been written to the injured Philemon, to Gaius mine host, and the elect lady and her children? Surely this fact speaks for itself, and shows that the Word of God needs no human interpretation.

And if this were not enough, see how Scripture interprets itself; how the *search* of which our Lord speaks is repaid by the light thrown on the inspired word by collected and compared passages.

Does St. Paul say (Rom. iv. 5), "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"? St. James adds (ii. 17, 18), "Faith without works is dead, being alone.

Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." So the one explains the other, and the two show most clearly the relative position of faith and works.

Are the readers of the gospel of St. John cast down and despondent on reading, "Without me ye can do nothing"? St. Paul shows the encouragement therein contained as he bursts forth in the expression, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Time does not permit of more instances being now given; but to the humble, prayerful searcher of the Bible, "God is His own interpreter." But the sufficiency of God's word as a Rule of Faith is proved by *fact*—the *thousands that have found salvation* by the simple, unexplained word of God. As if to assure us of this, St. Paul gives us one special instance. When on his mission tour to Philippi, the jailor fell before him in an agony of conviction and cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" How did St. Paul treat him? Did he enter into any elaborate argument or teaching? Nothing of the kind. He just takes the simple word of his Master, as recorded by St John and spoken to Nicodemus, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." He applies this to the jailor, and says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." This was sufficient; the agonised perishing heart accepted the Saviour and

was at *peace*, thus proving the sufficiency of the simple Word of God as a Rule of Faith. Lectures are not the place for anecdote, or many authenticated proofs might be given of this point; but every minister and every teacher knows that if a soul is brought to God by any particular sermon or teaching it is almost invariably by the text or some passage quoted, and comparatively rarely by argument, however well adduced, or metaphor however carefully sustained.

Under this head, however, those who deny the sufficiency of Holy Scripture bring forward certain *objections*, the first of which is this: "If the Word of God is of itself a sufficient Rule of Faith, what is the need of a ministry?" To this we may reply: "If the bread which our Saviour brake was sufficient for the wants of the five thousand what was the need of the Apostles distributing it?" God can save souls without a ministry, but it is His will to work by means; and thus he employs His servants to bring the Bread of Life within the reach of all. The ministry is the ministry of the word, and the idea is that of serving all, high and low, rich and poor, with the simple Gospel of the grace of God, "which is able to make them wise unto salvation."

Another objection is, that men differ about the meaning of Scripture, or in other words

that "Holy Scripture does not so clearly state truth as to prevent men from erring." But, surely, this which is thought an unanswerable objection really refutes itself. If the finite mind of man is so liable to error as to mistake the meaning of truth when stated, even by infinite wisdom, how much more will it mistake it, when it has fettered that infinite wisdom with finite interpretation.

A third objection is taken from the Bible itself, resting on such statements as that contained in the last verse of St. John's gospel: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they were written every one, I suppose that even the world itself should not contain the books that should be written." From this, such objectors argue that many acts and words of Jesus and His apostles, which are necessary for our knowledge, have not been written, but handed down orally; the fatal consequences of which belief may be seen in the thirteen articles subjoined, by Pope Pius IV., to the Nicene Creed in the 16th century, of which the following specimen will suffice: "I constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls there detained are aided by the prayers of the faithful." "In like manner that the saints, reigning together with Christ, are to be venerated and invoked, and that they offer prayers to God for us, and that their relics are to be

venerated. "This true Catholic faith, without which no one can be saved, . . . I promise, vow, and swear to retain and confess, by God's help, to the very end of life."

The objection which opens the door to such teaching as this may be most simply and forcibly answered by using Scripture as its own interpreter, and referring to the last two verses of the twentieth chapter of St. John. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name." Surely this verse alone proves that Holy Scripture is a sufficient Rule of Faith.

But those who deny that the Bible is the only Rule of Faith, teach that the Word of God is hard to be understood, and so must not be entrusted to every one.

IV. We must therefore next endeavour to show *that the Word of God is given to all, and so must be withheld from none.*

This appears from the fact that its invitations, warnings, and promises are *universal*. There is only one limit to the invitations of God's Word. The need and the will of those to whom they are addressed: "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters"; "Come unto me al'

ye that labour"; "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The invitation is universal, and therefore should of right be put into the hands of all whom it concerns.

The same with the warnings: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life"; "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God"; "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He shall come in the glory of His Father." No one can perish unwarned, and therefore the warnings cannot rightly be kept from any.

And the promises are universal: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father"; "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Truly we may bless God for the "whosoever" of the Bible, but we can have no right to exclude any from access to that book which contains invitations, warnings, and promises which are universal.

That the Word of God is given to all, is proved also by its particular adaptation to every position in life. Rich and poor, parents and children, masters and servants, kings and subjects, all find something in that book especially for them; indeed, as we have already seen, there is scarcely any rank which has not

furnished one even of the *writers* in the inspired volume.

The king, the noble, the magistrate—in a word, all the powers that be—find in that book not only precept but example. The bishop, the presbyter, the deacon, the evangelist, the teacher—all have directions for their own special line of duty. The philanthropist and the benefactor are directed to carry out their work with simplicity and cheerfulness; the man who works either with head or hand is warned not to be slothful, but to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; the head of the family is directed how to rule his household; the wife how to regulate her life; while children and servants have each special rules for their guidance. Surely, a book which thus enters into every particular position in life is not to be withheld from any.

And, still further, the Word of God applies to every circumstance of life: prosperity, adversity, perplexity, ease, suffering, bereavement, there is a word for each. Is a man suddenly put in possession of wealth? It says, "If riches increase, set not thine heart upon them." Does he lose his all? "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world?" Is his life one uneventful, easy path? "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Has he gone back from God? He has the promise, "I will heal their backslidings." Has disappointment

embittered his path, and left him friendless and alone? He finds that "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Has bereavement come, and is the prop and stay removed? The Word of God tells of one who is "the Father of the fatherless, and the God of consolation to the widow."

Universal in its declarations, particular in its applications, embracing every position, every circumstance, every change of life, surely the Word of God can be withheld from none.

One more point remains, and a most important one. Not only is Holy Scripture the Rule of Faith, but no other rule is to be received.

V. The Word of God is the *Revelation of Christ*; and as in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so all which is not contained in that Word of God, or cannot be proved by it, must be spurious wisdom, and knowledge falsely so called, and therefore "is not to be required of any man to be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

That the Word of God is the *revelation of Christ* is not difficult to prove. The Gospels speak for themselves; the book of the Acts of the Apostles simply shows how those Apostles, filled with the Holy Ghost, carried out the commands and bequest of their Lord, teaching

all nations to believe on the name of the Lord Jesus. The Epistles are full of the same teaching, and truly carry out the words, "Christ is all, and in all"; while nothing can be more striking than the words which introduce the last book of the Bible: "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass."

Nor are we without many proofs that the Old Testament also is the revelation of Christ. Our Lord Himself says, speaking of the existing Scriptures (John v. 39), "They are they that testify of me"; and of his walk towards Emmaus, St. Luke says (xxiv. 27), "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Two preachers also in the Acts of the Apostles, dealing with the same books, prove our point: the one Apollos (Acts xviii. 28), who "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ"; the other, St. Paul, who says before Agrippa (xxvi. 22-23), "I continue unto this day saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come—that Christ should suffer and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead." Many more sayings of the same kind might be quoted, but few more striking than that contained in

Revelation xix. 10, "The testimony of Jesus is the *spirit of prophecy*."

But the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the Word of God is the revelation, is in Himself the embodiment of all wisdom, knowledge, and truth. The eternal Son of God—one with the Father from the beginning or before the ages; the Word, or the expression of the *will* of the Father. He speaks of Himself as "The Way, The Truth, and The Life," and He sends the Holy Spirit, in speaking of whom He says, "He shall testify of Me." This argument (*viz.* that Christ, of whom the Scriptures are the revelation, contains all wisdom and knowledge and truth, and therefore that whatever is not included in His word, or proved by it must not be received) is one of which St. Paul makes great use, and on which he rests much in dealing with those churches which were becoming seduced by the traditions of men. Thus, writing to the Galatians, who were being drawn under the influence of Judaizing teachers, and were becoming fettered by traditions, he says (iii. 1-2), "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was evidently set forth?" And in his epistle to the Corinthians, who were being led by human efforts to explain away the doctrines and practice of the Gospel, he says (I. i. 22), "The Jews require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

In writing to the Ephesians and to the Colossians he had a different sort of tradition to combat, it was a mixture of Jewish ritual, and heathen philosophy, crying out for greater intellect, and idealising as almost objects of worship different attributes of the mind. This he overcomes by the same teaching in both cases; writing to the Ephesians he says (i. 17), "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him"; while to the Colossians he speaks still more strongly, saying of Christ, as is proved by the original (II. 3), "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Then if *all* are hidden in Him, all that spring from any other source must be false. He reveals to us in His word all that is needful for us, and whatever is contrary to that word, modifies it, or seeks to explain away any part of it, is antagonistic to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

St. Paul, however, makes one further step, "Ye are complete in Him" (ii. 10). You want no direction that He does not give, no doctrine that He does not furnish, no means He does not supply, no strength He does not infuse. "Ye are complete in Him." Complete in Him, and the Scriptures are they that testify of Him! What other Rule of Faith, then, can we need; what can we, dare we, accept? If Christ calls us complete, that is, finished, in Him, who shall dare add his hand to His completed work?

Our endeavour has been to show that the Word of God is inspired, complete, sufficient, given to all; and that as it is in itself a perfect

revelation of Christ, no other Rule of Faith can be received. And if this be established, what have we gained? We have gained this point: all who possess a Bible have an inspired direction for themselves, given by Jesus Christ through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That this is perfect, i.e., there are no directions wanting. That it is sufficient for all their needs, let us pause on that thought; sufficient to convince, sufficient to save, sufficient for the sinner, sufficient for the saint, sufficient for the peasant, sufficient for the peer, sufficient in joy and in sorrow, sufficient in life and in death.

We have gained a standard by which to test all that we hear and think, one unerring guide; a standard to which we should submit, as the Bereans did, all the doctrines that we hear, and by which we should regulate every act that we do; a standard that may seem hard and unintelligible to many, but which is open to the poorest, meanest comprehension in answer to humble prayer for the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

We have gained a trust, a precious trust, committed to each one, a treasure unspeakable, a test most precious; for we may apply it to every thing, every person, every thought, every act; a guide unfailing from earth to heaven; a revealed Saviour. But for this trust we must give an account. Is it studied; how is it studied? Is it loved, sought, followed? By it we are to live, by it we shall be judged; and in that day, if never before, we shall discover the value of the Word of God as the only Rule of Faith.

Justification by Faith.

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THREE words embody the subject of our lecture this evening; but, though few in number, their importance cannot be over-rated: they are the very foundation of the Christian Religion and the Protestant Faith—the watchword, as it were, of the glorious Reformation; and, more than this, they contain the truth, the rejection of which condemns the most upright, moral, intellectual man to eternal death, while its acceptance enables the one who has been the greatest sinner to be at peace with God.

A doctrine of such a nature, and involving such results, is not likely to be favourably received by mankind, whose natural bent is to assert their own independence and magnify their own powers; and both history and experience show that no doctrine has ever been more violently or more constantly assailed. Scepticism and Superstition, Herodian and Pharisee have combined to attack it, directly and indirectly: on the one hand to stigmatise it as a doctrine impossible and absurd; and on the

other, to explain it away, or confuse it with other leading truths of the Gospel.

But although there are, on the other hand, many who believe this doctrine, it is to be feared that comparatively few of them really enter into its nature and bearing on themselves; and it is for want of clear understanding on fundamental points like this, that so many, who seem to be children of God, "concerning faith have made shipwreck."

Our subject appears naturally to fall under the following heads:—

I. The Doctrine Defined.

II. The Doctrine Explained.

III. The Doctrine Attacked.

IV. The Doctrine Proved.

V. The Doctrine in its Connection with other Fundamental Truths.

I. To begin with its Definition. It is important to arrive at the scriptural limit of each word, and especially of "Justification." This is a word frequently used in both the Old and New Testaments, and always in one particular sense. Thus (Deut. xxv. 1), "They shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked"; and (Prov. xvii. 15), "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just"; (Ps. cxliii. 2), "In thy sight shall no man living be justified." All point to the verdict passed on an

accused person before a judge. The same sense obtains with the use of the word in the New Testament in such passages as (I. Cor. iv. 4), "I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord;" or (Romans viii. 33, 34), "It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" and still more strongly (Rom. iv. 5), "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." These quotations show distinctly that Justification does not mean *making* just, or a change in the *being* of a man, but *considering* and *pronouncing* just, or a change in the *position* of an accused person.

The word "Faith," too, needs a definition. It is used here in its highest and most definite sense; and while we accept St. Paul's definition of it—"the substance of things hoped for," we must connect the objects of hope with Him who is the cause of Justification; and this we are told throughout God's Word is none other than Jesus Christ. The faith here spoken of, then, is the faith which is in Christ Jesus; and adopting St. Paul's idea of the "substance," it may be called the laying hold of Jesus Christ by our hearts, and the appropriating of His work to ourselves. It is immensely important on this point to distinguish between historical belief in some person past, or at a

distance, and Christian faith in a Saviour real, present, and, as a substance, within the grasp of our hearts.

There remains another word in our title which requires definition, and that is the word "by"; which may be applied in various ways, to the Author, the Agent, the Instrument, or the Effect. In its present use, however, the word is applied to faith as the *instrument*, for it would be equally true to say that we are justified by the Father as the Author, or the Son as the Agent, or by works as the Effect or Proof; but the Means or Instrument by which the sinner obtains the Justification, which God the Father willed and God the Son wrought, is Faith.

Thus we may roughly define our subject as "The pronouncing of the sinner free from the sentence of the Divine law, in consideration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; which freedom and righteousness become the sinner's own, if he accepts God's offered mercy in Christ."

II. This doctrine, however, needs *explanation* and *expansion*. It embraces almost every other fundamental doctrine: for instance, it implies an accusation, and that the accusation is true; that a penalty was attached to the crime committed, and that some unseen intervening act was the only means of avoiding the penalty; that this act, being accepted by the accused

person, renders him free from his crime in the sight of the judge, and restores him to privileges and position superior even to those which he before had forfeited.

Man's natural, inherent corruption, however much the notion may be denounced, is what necessitates Justification. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, of his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God." Let the sceptic, the philosopher, the worldling say what he will, this statement is true; nothing short of this would have brought the Son of God from heaven to atone for sin. But if man is thus lost and under sentence of death, how can he be restored to God's favour? How can the sinner, who has been earning the wages of sin, receive the title "of the inheritance of the saints in light"?

Will baptism reverse the sentence of "guilty"? How then did St. Peter say to Simon Magus, who had been baptised (Acts viii. 13), "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." Can a sacrament, which man can bestow or withhold at will, alter the sinner's state in the sight of God? Lest we should think this, we are expressly told that Abraham's "faith was reckoned to him for righteousness," not in circumcision but in uncircumcision; that is to say, when he was not visibly

in covenant with God. No outward work, then, no *opus operatum* can reconcile man to his Maker.

But will repentance and a determination to amendment of life change the position? What shall we say of one who has in his possession a costly fabric, once pure and spotless, but which has become stained and foul with crimson marks? Will his sorrow blot them out? Will his determinate watchfulness against any future stain remove one of the past? Will the tears of the child who has broken his pitcher unite the fragments? Will the punishment he voluntarily undergoes replace what was destroyed? Surely, then, no personal penance or abasement can make the unholy holy, and restore the lost soul to righteousness and peace.

Nor can man's intervention avail. Fain would many a sin-laden heart bring its burden to some fellow-sinner, and ask for pardon in the name of God. Thus the Church of Rome would lead us to believe that her priests can apportion penalties, and clear the sinner; but when we are told that *God* "will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus xxxiv. 7), how can we believe such a power delegated to *man*, especially when we read (Psalm xlix. 7), "None can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him"; and when priest and penitent are involved in the same condemnation?

The sinner, then, can be cleansed by no outward rite, purified by no inward act, restored by no human intervention. What, then, can save him? How can God be just and yet spare the creatures He has made? How can He be true to His word and not destroy those on whom the curse has come? None but God Himself could have found any way of salvation; but He has done so.

The first point necessary is, that the penalty He decreed should be paid, and if paid by way of propitiation it must be in the person of one who had nothing to atone for himself, and was therefore sinless. *This could only be the Son of God.* But the sentence was pronounced on *man*; so to render the atonement efficacious man must keep the law, and man must suffer; therefore our Lord Jesus Christ took man's nature, and became in all points like unto His brethren, yet without sin.

The debt or penalty being paid for all by His death, it was necessary that the discharge or pardon should be proclaimed; and this was done by the resurrection of our Saviour from the dead, which showed that the Divine justice was satisfied, the curse removed, a general pardon signed, and, as it were, held out to all who would receive it. Each soul who by faith realises that all this was done for himself or herself makes that pardon, in point of fact, a personal,

private, individual salvation. But this is not all. It is not sufficient to come before God in a *negative* state, that is, merely with our sins washed away; He requires something *positive*, for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Now, our doctrine states that by faith we become partakers of the atonement of Christ, and so have in Him a title to God's pardon; but it goes further, and shows that, as St. Paul says (Col. ii. 13), those who truly believe in Him, and accept His work as done for them, are "quickened together with Him." Being in Him by faith, we become partakers of His holiness, not only being dead unto sin, but alive unto God. He has borne our sins, and He gives us His righteousness. Thus, with all the stain of sin covered, with the righteousness of Jesus Christ girded on him and fixed on him, the sinner is counted holy in the holiness of another, and so justified. It is as if God said to the sinner: "I must have righteousness, and you cannot give it; believe on Me, who have raised up Christ from the dead, and I will accept that faith in place of what you do not possess, and reckon the righteousness of Christ to your account."

III. The doctrine before us being so far expanded and explained, we have next to notice the way in which it has been *attacked*.

It is, however, of some importance to show that attacks on this doctrine have been of comparatively recent date, the old Fathers having held it more or less firmly. Augustine for instance, says—notwithstanding the efforts made to claim him as a champion of human merit—“We may not say I did good works before I believed, and was therefore chosen; what good work can there be *before* faith?” While, that the Church of England in its earliest ages held this belief is clearly shown by a prescribed form of prayer for use in the visitation of the sick, fifteen years after the Norman Conquest. The priest asked the sick person, “Dost thou believe to come to glory, not by thine own merits, but by the virtue and merit of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ?” “Dost thou believe that our Lord Jesus Christ did die for our salvation, and that none can be saved by his own merits or by any other means but by the merit of His passion?” And in course of exhortation he said, “If the Lord say unto thee, thou hast deserved damnation, say: ‘Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ betwixt Thee and my bad merits; and I offer His merit instead of the merits which I ought to have, but yet have not.’”

This doctrine remained unattacked till the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when there arose a body of writers, half philosophers, half

theologians, who were called the Schoolmen, or Scholastic Divines. Two of these, Peter the Lombard and Thomas Aquinas, began the attack on Justification by Faith. They brought in two technical terms which, unless explained, may cause, as all error does, a good deal of confusion. Merit or deserving was, according to them, of two kinds: merit of *condignity*, and merit of *congruity*. The first referred to what was legally due, as wages to a servant, or payment for work performed. The second referred to what was not *legally* earned, but ought in *equity* and fairness to be given, as a gratuity to one who had done his best, though he had failed in his allotted task. The Schoolmen went on to say that man could claim nothing of God legally, or of condignity, but that he might, as they put it, by doing good works, in the best way he could, deserve grace of congruity; forgetting on the one hand, that grace or free favour could never be *deserved*, and on the other, that man is not only concerned with present failures, but with a burden of past sin.

The mystifications of the Schoolmen, however, were reduced to systematic order, two centuries afterwards by the Council of Trent, in whose sixth session the following expressions occur: "Justification is not remission of sins alone, but sanctification and renovation of the inner man by a voluntary reception of grace and gifts;

whence man from unrighteous becomes righteous. . . . If any one shall say that men are justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness alone, or only by remission of sins, to the exclusion of grace and charity, which is poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and which inheres in them ; or that the grace by which we are justified is the favour of God alone, let him be accursed " !

It would be well if such doctrines as this were confined to the sixteenth century and the Council of Trent. But among the Tract divines who have given rise to the style of teaching called Tractarian, we have such sayings as the following : " To justify, means counting righteous, but includes under its meaning making righteous ; it is a pronouncing holy while it proceeds to make holy." These are open attacks on the one saving doctrine ; but there are others of a more insidious character. If we believe that a baptised person is by virtue of that sacrament born anew, and that so-called baptismal grace is saving grace, we do away with Justification by Faith. If we believe that confessing our sins to a fellow-sinner, and receiving absolution from him, removes any guilt from us, we overthrow Justification by Faith. If we believe that by any striving or working of our own we can obtain God's favour, and place ourselves in the position of His people, we deny Justifica-

tion by Faith. Whenever we in any degree rest our hopes on what we can do, instead of finding our title in what we have not done, but what has been done for us, we ignore Justification by Faith. This is the doctrine of which the compilers of our Homilies write: "Justification, by which, of unjust we are made just before God, is the strong rock and foundation of Christian religion"; and Luther affirms it to be the article of a standing or falling church. And yet this article is, as we have seen, openly attacked and denied, not only in the formularies of the Romish Church, but in the writings of some who profess to belong to the Anglican communion; while many, not only of those who call themselves Evangelical, but of those who have on grounds of alleged false teaching left the Established Church, omit, ignore, and mystify the doctrine which, alike in Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies, she holds fast.

IV. Our next duty, then, is to *Prove this doctrine*; and as it is essentially one of God's devising, we shall naturally look for the bulk of our testimony in His revealed word.

It may be well, in the first instance, to take some of the indirect proof which abounds in the types and typical things of the Old Testament. No sooner was man conscious of his shame, and his inability on the one hand to

present himself as he was before the pure and holy God, and on the other to find any covering which might conceal his polluted nature, than God revealed to him, by a typical act, the mystery of Justification. The victim was slain, foreshadowing the death of the Saviour for man's sin; from the skin of the victim slain, God offers Adam a covering to hide his fallen body; and on his accepting this, and putting it on (an act typical of the sinner putting on the righteousness of Christ by faith), he is accounted worthy to stand before God. This is shortly followed by an equally striking typical lesson: Cain, as though he could of himself do good works, brings a *present* to God, which God at once rejects. Abel, as being an unworthy sinner, offers a life as an *atonement*; this God accepts as a sacrifice of faith, and *counts him worthy*.

The history of Abraham, too, is rich in illustrative proof of the doctrine. He "believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness" (Gen. xv. 6). His son's life is demanded; he is under sentence of death; as the knife is about to descend, the stroke is stayed; a ram is caught in a thicket, which Abraham takes and offers; the vicarious sacrifice is accepted, and the forfeited life restored.

The Mosaic law also affords us many typical proofs: every sacrifice, more or less, and espe-

cially the ceremonies of the day of atonement, pointed to this truth; but one in particular shows it forth with great distinctness. The leper (always the type of the sinner) was, when cleansed, to bring two birds, the one slain over running water, pointing out the combined purity and atonement of Jesus slain; the other dipped in the blood of his fellow, soaring aloft as a type of Jesus risen, restoring life to the sinner who has died in Him, and risen with Him to newness of life. Thus far the *satisfaction of another* has been especially brought forward: the *faith* which accepts this is foreshadowed by the miracle of the brazen serpent. The serpent's bite was cured by the brazen serpent made; the instrumental cause of the cure was the look cast upward by the sufferer. Thus, sin is cured by Christ, whom God made to be sin for us; and the instrumental cause of this cure is faith, the looking up of the soul to the Saviour, and the claiming Him as his own.

In later ages, too, Israel was not left without typical proof of Justification by Faith; it was distinctly shown in the time of Elisha, whose every public act was more or less typical. One of the members of a school of prophets taught by him dropped his axe-head in the water; it had sunk and was lost, when the prophet cut down a piece of living wood and cast it after the dead iron, which rose immediately to the surface; the

man reached forth his hand and took it. Thus we have the life lent, lost, sunk in sins, recovered by the death of the living Saviour, and restored to man, who, as it were, reaches forth and takes it by faith.

But in no way was this more strikingly explained than in the great central feast of the Jewish system, which foreshadows, as we are taught by St. Paul, Christ our Passover sacrificed for us. The destroying angel passed over the sprinkled blood; nothing could save the inmates; but the faith which consented to the means, and personally appropriated them to each, was reckoned *for* righteousness, and was the means of giving the life which otherwise was forfeited.

We come now to *direct* scriptural proof, and this is first *prophetical*, of which a few instances will suffice. The 53rd of Isaiah is full of these proofs, specimens of the teaching of the whole book, but especially the sixth verse, "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Jeremiah also (xxiii. 6) very shortly, but clearly, states the doctrine: "This is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our Righteousness." And Zechariah (xiii. 1) speaks of Christ as the "fountain opened . . . for sin and for uncleanness."

Our Lord Himself in the *Gospel* clearly states and explains that faith in Him is the only in-

strument of Justification, saying (John iii. 14, 15), "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life"; and (v. 24), "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life"; and again (xi. 25), "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Passing now to the proof of this doctrine in Apostolic writings, we find two epistles written on this very point, those to the Romans and to the Galatians. The first begins by showing that Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, and then says (iii. 21, 22, 24), "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.....Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"; and (verse 26) "That He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus"; and further on (v. 18, 19) St. Paul adds, "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's

disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." In the second epistle written on this point, that to the Galatians, he enlarges on this doctrine, saying (iii. 11, &c.), "That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And in his second epistle to the Corinthians, v. 21, he states the doctrine still more plainly, if possible, "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Many other proofs might be alleged from God's Word; but it seems that enough have been given to establish the scriptural character of the doctrine of Justification by Faith.

One more kind of proof, however, may be usefully brought forward—that of *experience*. Many cases might be given to show the effect of the acceptance of this doctrine on the heart, but two shall suffice. The first that of *Luther*, who says: "When I was a monk, I thought by-and-by that I was utterly cast away if at any time I felt the lust of the flesh. . . . I assayed many ways to help and quiet my conscience, but it would not be"; and then he tells

us that in his monastery he found a Latin Bible, and his thirst to understand the Epistle to the Romans was insatiable; and that as he was meditating day and night on the righteousness therein revealed, it pleased God to open his eyes and to show him that it related to the method of justifying a sinner by faith. "Hence," he adds, "I felt myself a new man, and all the Scriptures seemed to have a new face; I ran quickly through them; as my memory enabled me, I collected together the leading terms; and I observed in their meaning a strict analogy according to my new views. This expression, 'Righteousness of God,' now became as sweet to my mind as it had been hateful before, and this very passage of St. Paul against which my heart had risen up in a silent sort of blasphemy, proved to me the entrance into Paradise." The other case, that of Cardinal Bellarmine, is still more remarkable. All his life he had been the determined champion of the doctrine of *human merit*, but in the prospect of death he writes: "It is the safest way to rely wholly on the merits of Christ Jesus"; and in his will he says: "I beseech Thee, O God, to receive me among Thy holy and elect ones, not as the valuer of merit, but as the bountiful giver of mercy." These are not isolated cases. None can know peace with God who have not accepted the righteousness of God placed to their account; while

those who do accept and cling to Christ alone, have reason to know that to them there is *no condemnation*.

V. We come now to the last, but by no means the least important part of our subject: *The doctrine viewed in connection with other fundamental doctrines of salvation.*

1. What connection has Justification with Baptism? Of this the Tract divines say: "We are justified by Christ alone, in that He has purchased the gift; by faith alone, in that faith asks for it; by baptism alone, for baptism conveys it." To which Dr. Pusey adds: "Justification is the act of God imparting His divine presence to the soul through baptism"; and the Priest's Prayer-book, which arrogates to itself the position of an appendix to the Book of Common Prayer, says: "Baptism, by which we are admitted into close relationship with God through the atonement, is the external means or instrument of Justification." In the face of this, I venture to state that baptism and Justification have not the slightest necessary connection; each being able to exist, and as a matter of fact each existing, in hundreds of cases, independently of the other. For, in the Old Testament, as I have already shown, there is much of Justification; but there is nothing of baptism. Is it replied, "Circumcision was in

the place of it." Then observe St. Paul's words (Rom. iv. 9, 10): "Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness which he had being yet uncircumcised."

Again, our Lord distinctly states the means of salvation to be faith alone: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life"; and when He gives His commission to the Apostles, He says, "He that *believeth* and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not," without any mention of baptism, "shall be damned." Baptism was thus to be the seal, on the one hand, of the confession of Christ by the convert; and on the other, of God's acceptance of his faith, and God's recognition of His own promise, thus visibly sealed by an act of His own institution. Baptism without Faith, by our Lord's own words, is valueless; but that Faith without Baptism will save, is evidenced by the thief on the cross, the salvation of Abraham; and the words of St. Paul, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That this is *really* the teaching of the Church of England, according to the Word of God, is clearly shown by the 27th Article, in which, under the subject of Baptism, we find

the words: "Faith is *confirmed*, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God"; it must, therefore, have existed independently before it can be confirmed.

We may say, then, that Justification by Faith has no necessary connection with Baptism, both may exist independently; the former sufficient of itself, the second by itself valueless. Baptism, however, is a sign or seal on God's side; a seal to His promises, to those who believe, on man's side; a visible sign and outward profession (at any rate, in its original intention) of laying hold of Christ and following Him. It will readily be understood that in early Christianity, as now in Heathen Missions, the laying hold of Christ and believing in Him, on the part of Jew or Gentile, would almost invariably be closely followed by Baptism or the outward confession; and thus, far more would be understood by the word among those to whom the Apostles wrote, when Baptism involved often the giving up of all, even life itself for Jesus, than at the present day, when it is treated too often as a conventional rite, rather than as a solemn act of Dedication to God or Confession of Jesus.

2. What is the connection between Justification and Sanctification? Of this, the Council of Trent asserts, "Justification is not remission of sins alone, but Sanctification and renovation of the inner man." The Tract writers say, as before

quoted, "To justify, means counting righteous; but includes under its meaning making righteous." The Priest's Prayer Book, quoted above, states, "Justification and Sanctification are substantially the same thing." But how can this be, when their *agents are different*? Justification is throughout the Bible imputed to Jesus Christ. The Godhead justifies; but it is through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Sanctification, on the other hand, is attributed to the Holy Ghost as (I. Peter i. 2), "through Sanctification of the Spirit"; although it is also the work of the entire Godhead, through the agency of the Third Person.

Again, *their scope is different*. Justification being external and once for all; sanctification internal and continual. Those who put on the wedding garment in the parable were entitled at once to sit down to the feast and be alike strengthened and refreshed in the inner man; and so St. Paul shows in the Galatians, when he says (iv. 6), "Because ye *are* sons," i.e., have received the adoption and been justified, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." In the structure of the Epistle to the Romans, too, the same truth is shown: for after the apostle has explained justification in the earlier chapters, he shows in the whole of the eighth chapter, how those that are in Christ by faith must walk in the Spirit. Our

blessed Lord Himself also in the xvii. of St. John, shows the difference between Justification and Sanctification. Speaking of His disciples, He says, "Those whom Thou hast given Me"; and adds, "they have known surely that I came out from Thee, and have believed that Thou didst send me." Having thus shown that they were His by faith, and therefore justified, He adds, "sanctify them through Thy truth." We see, then, that Justification is distinct from Sanctification: the one *imputed*, the other *imparted*; the one a title, the other a fitness; the one final, the other gradual.

3. What is the connection between Justification by Faith in the finished work of Christ, and His eternal Priesthood; between the remission of our sins once for all; or the imputing righteousness to the sinner, and the cleansing from daily defilement?

These two works are to be kept distinct, as is shown from the expressions, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of *the world*," and "He shall save *His people* from their sins." The difference and the connection between these two works our Lord shows most beautifully in His explanation of His washing the Disciples' feet: "he that *is* washed," He says, that is, justified, "needeth not save to wash his feet," that is, cleansing from the daily sins of the daily walk. Thus Christ is in a twofold sense our Saviour

saving us from wrath and death, by taking our sins and giving us His righteousness, applying His blood to us once; and also saving His people from sin itself, by the daily exercise of His power as High Priest. Thus there are, as it were, two daily works going on in the children of God: cleansing from daily sin, which is the work of Jesus the Eternal Priest; and renewing in holiness with daily grace and life, which is the work of the Holy Ghost. But,

4. What is the connection between Justification and good works? for St. James says (ii. 24), in seeming contradiction, but really in confirmation of St. Paul: "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." We have already noticed that it is as true to say, we are justified by works, as to say, we are justified by faith, though in a very different sense; for while Faith is the instrument, works are the effect and evidence. Thus, we may say, a man is a negro by his colour, or lame by his walk, not meaning that the colour or walk is the cause or instrument, but the effect or evidence. He is a negro by birth, or lame by an accident; and yet the appearance in each case is the cause of his being what he is *relatively to us*, or, in other words, of our knowing what he is. St. James is speaking originally of the inconsistencies of professing Christians, and requires from them the evidence of their Justification,

that is, good words. The 12th Article of the Church of England takes this clear and Scriptural view, for it says, "Albeit that good works, which are the fruits of Faith and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins and endure the severity of God's judgment, yet are they pleasant and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith, insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruit." But it may be asked, "If our works have nothing to do with our Justification, except as proofs and evidences, why does our Lord in the Parable of the Talents represent the future state as depending on works?" The answer is not difficult. Justification is our title to service, we cannot *serve* till we are *saved*; and then, in proportion to the fruit our Faith bears, so will our reward be. All the stars are perfect in glory and purity, but "one star differeth from another star in glory"; and so with the servants of God—all will be perfect in happiness, but He will give unto every *man according as his work shall be*.

I have endeavoured, but I am conscious with what imperfect success, to state, explain, and prove the great doctrine of Justification by Faith; to show its existence independently of baptism; its distinctness from sanctification (in agent, position, and scope); its finality, and

therefore its difference from the daily salvation of our Eternal Priest; and its relation to good works, being the cause, not the effect; the root from which they spring, and not the point to which they tend. But, be it remembered, that this Justification is a personal matter: one which concerns, and vitally concerns, every one of us. We may be earnest, thoughtful, clever; we may be deeply read in divinity, skilled in controversy, staunch in Protestantism, and with all that, have no personal experience of Justification. The doctrine stands out clearly and distinctly for each one: opposed in its beautiful simplicity to all the confusion and indistinctness of false teaching on the point. It enables each believer to say just this: "Christ has taken my sins, has died to bear my punishment, has risen to give His righteousness unto me; and thus, if I can join Himself and myself together in my heart, I have a title to know myself saved, to ask and receive His Holy Spirit, to bring my daily sins to my Eternal Priest, to work for Him who has died for me, and to be sure that when He calls me, it will be to enter into the joy of my Lord."

The Lord's Supper.

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Our subject this evening is one of great interest and no little difficulty: it is one of the chief points of difference between the Protestant and the Romanist; and not only so, but the view we take of the Lord's Supper marks the extent to which we, on the one hand, surrender ourselves to Christ by faith, or, on the other, look for any visible means, or human agency to bring us to Him.

The clearest and simplest way to treat this subject is to look at it in the Scriptural point of view, laying aside as far as possible all words and expressions which are purely of man's devising, or human application. Following this idea, we find that the one Scriptural title of the ordinance of which we are treating is, "the Lord's Supper." (1 Cor. xi. 20.)

From the account given by St. Paul, however, another term has come into use, the "Communion," or "Holy Communion," the meaning of which is "joint participation"; and from our Lord's act of blessing (the Greek word for which is *eucharistein*), as well as St. Paul's expression, "cup of blessing," for which the

word is the same, some have given it the title of "Eucharist."

But we almost invariably call it a "sacrament," which word (not found in Scripture) means, technically, "an outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace"; and the church of Christ, therefore, recognises no sacraments which are not instituted by Christ Himself. There is another special propriety in the use of the word Sacrament in connection with the Lord's Supper: its original common meaning was, in Latin, the military oath of fidelity to his leader, which the soldier took before battle; and so we, in partaking of the Lord's Supper, besides all other benefits, remind ourselves of our duties and responsibilities as baptised Christians, or soldiers of the cross.

Two words, which will occur in the course of our considerations, need rather careful definition: they are the epithets—"subjective," and "objective." They are used as adjectives or adverbs, and may be thus explained: the word objective means that the thing or quality to which it is attached exists, or is what it is, *by itself*, or independently of any other thing or circumstance; while the word subjective, applied in the same way, means that the existence or nature depends upon *its relation to the subject spoken of*. Thus, grass is, *objectively*—that is, of itself—green, or soft; but we can only call it

good for food *subjectively*, or when we speak of it in connection with a horse, or other animal that likes it. So sacraments are Divine institutions, objectively; but efficacious, subjectively, i.e., dependently on being worthily received.

We pass now to our special subject, which may be treated as follows:—

I. The institution of the Lord's Supper, and its position in our Lord's teaching.

II. The Scriptural explanation and doctrine.

III. Unscriptural views and statements.

IV. False doctrines examined and refuted.

V. Uses and responsibilities of the Lord's Supper.

I. Let us trace the institution of this rite, and its position in our Lord's teaching; and this will be done in the most interesting way, if examined *historically*.

It was while partaking of the Feast of the Passover that the Lord's Supper was instituted; and we must bear in mind that every sacrifice was succeeded by a feast, and that the Feast of the Passover consisted of the Paschal Lamb, bread, and four cups of wine, one of which was always called "The Cup of Blessing."* Thus, the Passover was both a typical sacrifice and a commemorative feast; and on the same night that

* Browne on the XXXIX Articles, 710.

Jesus was betrayed, when He was about Himself to fulfil the type, the lamb, the bread, and the wine were before Him. His earthly ministry was now brought to a close, and the Disciples were to learn to follow Him no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit: they were to walk by faith and not by sight; their souls were to grow, and so must be nourished by spiritual food—even by feeding on Him and His words spiritually, as He had shown in the discourse recorded in St. John vi. How was this to be kept before their minds? The daily round of sacrifices would be needless, as all were fulfilled; all that was external and typical would now be done away, the Paschal sacrifice accomplished. But the Paschal Feast should remain, though changed in character; instead of feasting on the body of the lamb, to commemorate the lamb slain for their deliverance from Egypt's chains, and to typify the Lamb that was to be slain on Calvary, they should feast on the bread and wine, visibly and really to commemorate Him who, once slain, and so needing no fresh death to recal His, was the Bread and Life of the world. Nor could they ever in after times rightly partake of the bread and wine, over which such solemn words had been pronounced, without viewing them as speaking signs of what our Lord had taught about spiritual feeding, and so afresh receiving Him into the soul as its strength and life.

With this intention, when the lamb had been partaken of for the last time, our Lord takes and blesses bread and wine, and with His own hand and His own lips offers them to His Disciples: "Take, eat," says He, "this is my body." "Drink ye all of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament. Do this in remembrance of Me." No time was fixed for this commemorative supper. The typical sacrifice had been once a year—*that* was now no more; the feast which was to commemorate the death of Christ was fettered by no season, it was to be "as oft as ye shall drink it." Another point is noticeable in the history of this ordinance: Of those who partook of it, one went out to betray his Master; another denied Him; and, at the moment of danger, all forsook Him and fled. If such was the conduct of all the partakers, we cannot believe that there was *objective* grace in the first celebration of the Lord's Supper. And, before we turn from this narrative view, it is well to notice the extreme simplicity of all the details. There was no great preparation, no elaborate ceremonial; but "as they were eating, Jesus took bread," blessed, brake, and gave to them. All God's ways and God's doctrines are simple; and, as a rule, the further we stray from simplicity the further we err from truth.

Passing now to our next point, we will look at,—

II. The Scriptural doctrine of the Lord's Supper. It is a *commemorative feast*, recalling the death of Christ, and all connected with that death. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's death" (1 Cor. xi. 26.) "Do this in *remembrance* of Me." The One going away in body, would recal Himself to His forgetful people by a visible act, in which they should partake, and so remember Him. This is the primary view taken by the Church of England, as is shown by the answer to the question, "Why was the sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?" (Answer,) "For the continual *remembrance* of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby"; and in the Communion Service we find such passages as this: "To be by them received *in remembrance* of His meritorious cross and passion." "It is your duty to receive the Communion *in remembrance* of the sacrifice of His death, as He Himself has commanded." "To the end that we should alway *remember* the exceeding great love of our Master, and only Saviour, thus dying for us," &c.; and in the prayer of consecration we read: "Almighty God, our Heavenly Father Who did institute, and in His holy gospel command us to continue, a *perpetual memory* of that His precious death." The first point, then, which Scripture teaches on the subject, is that

the Lord's Supper is a commemorative feast.

But more than this, it is *a token of personal spiritual life*. Were it only a commemoration, it would be sufficient to gaze on the bread and wine; but, by our Lord's directions, each is to partake personally: "Take, eat"; "Drink ye all," were His words, as if giving a token of the need of His abiding in His people. It is not enough to hear of Him, or historically believe His life; each must personally surrender himself to Him, and abide in Him by faith. As the existence and sight of bread is not enough for a starving man without his eating it, so the existence and thought of Christ is not enough for the Christian without his living on it. Jesus Christ says (John vi. 53), "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you"; adding, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are spirit, and they are life." "Of this truth," says Dr. Vaughan,* "the Lord's Supper is a constant memento."

The Lord's Supper is, then, objectively, a commemoration and a token; its remaining characteristics are subjective to the worthy recipient, and are spiritual. It is *to those who receive it rightly a means of spiritually partaking*

* Vaughan on Confirmation, Lecture viii. 2.

of the Body and Blood of Christ. We must be careful to say *a means*, for we cannot confine such a partaking to this sacrament. Many who have never partaken of it have, without doubt, eaten the flesh of the Son of Man and drunk His blood, for of those who do not do so, our Lord says, "Ye have no life in you." What became, then, of the thief on the cross? What of all the Old Testament saints? And, further, if this were the only means of partaking of Christ, would St. Paul have confined his mention of it to one of his fourteen epistles?

That it is, if rightly partaken of, a means of feeding spiritually on Christ is shown by the words of delivering: "Take, eat; this is My body. . . . This is My blood of the New Testament." "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (joint partaking) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

That this partaking is only spiritual will appear more clearly under another head. Suffice it to say, now, that when the disciples partook of the Lord's Supper, His material body was visible and tangible to all, so that their partaking could only have been spiritual. Again, the material body can only be strengthened by what is material; and so the spirit requires for its sustenance that which is spiritual. As words,

faith, and teaching cannot strengthen the body, so bread and wine, and any food purely material, cannot strengthen the spirit. Our Lord, too, in His famous discourse (John vi. 63), of which this sacrament is a memento, shows in every possible way that the partaking of the believer can only be spiritual.

That such a partaking is subjective, or confined to the worthy recipient, is proved: first, by the cases of Judas and Peter, one of whom went out to betray Him, the other to deny Him; and, still further, by the words of St. Paul (I. Cor. xi. 29): "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh"—not the body and blood of Christ, but—"damnation to himself," his own condemnation, "not discerning," or considering, "the Lord's body." He does not discern it, so for him it does not exist, as he has not faith; on the other hand, as he approaches so holy and divinely-instituted an ordinance without faith or reverence, the very act condemns him.

This is the view held and taught by the Church of England, for in the 28th Article we read: "To such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the Body of Christ." . . . "The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner." In the 29th, the expression

is still more emphatic: "The wicked and such as are void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth, as St. Augustine says, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ." The prayer in the Communion Service, too, is marked by great distinctness: "Grant that we, *receiving these Thy creatures* of bread and wine may be partakers of His most blessed Body and Blood."

The Lord's Supper, however, is also a *looking forward* to the coming of Christ and the reign of His people with Him. He says, at the institution of it: "I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine till the day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom"; and St. Paul says: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." Thus, the idea includes that of expectation; and each time we partake we express our hope in the Lord's coming, and our patient waiting for it.

In its character, moreover, the Lord's Supper includes a *bond of union*: a joint partaking and a joint renewal of our profession. We are, in that sacrament, to look upon ourselves as members of Christ's body, and to embrace others in our thoughts and prayers. It reminds us that we are to tread life's path together; to feed on God's word together; to enter heaven

together; that the Church of Christ is to be *one*, made up of various individual parts, each supporting and each receiving support. So this joint partaking calls out Christian sympathy and Christian love; bids us "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"; it bids us "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

The Lord's Supper, then, viewed by the light of Scripture, is, *objectively*, a commemorative feast and a token of spiritual life; *subjectively*, to those who receive it in faith, it is a means of spiritually feeding on Christ, a looking-forward to His re-appearing, and a bond of Christian brotherhood.

III. But the simplicity of the ordinance has been at various times obscured by unscriptural teaching, in the fore-front of which stands the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

This is thus stated in the Catechism of the Council of Trent: "I further profess that in the Mass is offered unto God a true, proper, propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is really, truly, and substantially the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into His Body, and of the whole

substance of the wine into His Blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation." This doctrine distinctly states that, on the consecration of the elements, the bread ceases to be bread and becomes Christ's Body ; the wine ceases to be wine and becomes Christ's Blood. This, next to the doctrine of infallibility, is the main point in the teaching of the Church of Rome ; and so strongly is it held that the following sentence occurs in the Canons of Trent : " If any one shall deny that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there are contained really and substantially the Body and Blood, together with the Soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ ; but shall say, that He is only in it as in a sign or figure, or by His influence, let him be accursed."

A modification of this doctrine, called Consubstantiation, was held by Luther. He taught that the bread and wine remain ; but, that together with them, is present the Body and Blood of Christ, which is truly received by all communicants. As in a red-hot iron, he says, two distinct substances, iron and fire, are united, so is the body of Christ joined with the bread. His followers add, in seeking to explain the union of substances, that all those properties of the Divine nature, the exercise of which is essential to the office of Mediator, were communicated to the

human ; and that as He can only act where He is, and as human nature enters into the conception of His office, there is communicated to that nature a majestic omnipresence by which the Body of Christ, though a true body, may be in all places at the same time.

A third unscriptural doctrine on this point asserts, that there is no carnal or corporeal presence whatever ; but that there is a *real spiritual objective* presence, irrespective of the hearts of those who communicate. This is a mystical and mysterious view ; it sheds an aspect of mystery over the magnificent simplicity of the Lord's Supper : teaching a mysterious awesome presence on the so-called altar, the effect of which reaches even to those who do not partake. The extreme view of this doctrine is stated in Tract 90, which says, "This is what the Catholic Church seems to hold concerning our Lord's presence in the Sacrament : that He then personally and bodily is present with us in the way an object is, which we call present. How He is so we know not." A less offensive, but still misleading form of this doctrine, is stated by one of our ablest commentators, who says, in writing on the words, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" "He instructs us that . . . though He is verily and indeed present in the Holy Eucharist, yet the manner of His presence is not to be scrutinised by us ; let us not specu-

late inquisitively into the time and manner of His presence in the Holy Eucharist." Such vague, mysterious statements are unsatisfactory, and likely to lead persons to seek a presence different even from what the writers mean.

Other unscriptural doctrines are held : as that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice ; that the elements are to be adored ; and not to be received except when fasting.

IV. But we may now pass to examine these unscriptural doctrines by the light of revelation. Only let each one seek to consider them dispassionately and humbly, and to adopt that which God's word teaches, irrespective of any human interpretation or party.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of the bread and wine, is professedly proved by our Lord's words, "Take, eat, this is My Body.....this is My Blood." The doctrine is repugnant to common sense, as we cannot believe that a visible, tangible body could give itself under the form of bread and wine ; or that the feeding on a material being by the body, could do any good to the soul ; or that a change exists which taste, smell, and touch, alike deny. But, however opposed it might be to human philosophy, if supported by God's word, it would be our duty to yield our finite comprehension to His infinite wisdom. That it is

not so supported is what we have now to prove.

The words, "this is My Body," need not, and in fact do not, imply that it is substantially or really My Body. They need not; for the word used is what is logically called a *corpula*, and does not imply existence or substantial being. We might as well say that Christ was really and substantially a vine, a door, a rock, substantial bread, or any other of the characteristics which Christ, by a figure, applies to Himself. And not only do the Scriptures abound in this use of the word "is," but our own language and our own everyday expression proves it. When we see a likeness of any one we know, we at once say, that is my father, or my brother; and, on seeing one of ourselves, we are almost sure to say, that is myself. So that no force or proof can be attached to the word "is" beyond that of representation.

And, in point of fact, the words do not mean a change of the substance, for the Apostles did not so understand them. When, in the sixth chapter of St. John, our Lord said that "except we eat His flesh and drink His blood we have no life," the surprise felt was at once expressed in the question: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" But at the last Supper, when the Disciples heard the words, "This is My Body," not a word of surprise, not a ges-

ture or question is observed, for they, taught by our Lord's speech at Capernaum, interpreted the words spiritually, and spiritually partook.

Again, there had been from the earliest ages a strong prohibition to touch blood, and a further special restriction as to human blood. Can we suppose that our Blessed Lord, who would not allow one jot or tittle of the law to fail, could have ordered such a contradiction of it; or that the Disciples would have heard it without remonstrance, if they so understood it?

Look again at our Lord's own words: He who says "This is My body," says, "This cup is the New Testament." If we force the meaning in one place, we must, to be consistent, attach the same in the other, and call the cup the Testament. But He does not leave us without a yet more explicit statement. Having blessed the bread and wine, and given it to them, He says: "I will drink no more of *this fruit of the vine*." Could any thing be more distinct? After being blessed and imparted, it was still, by our Lord's own words, "the fruit of the vine." St. Paul, too, gives us further confirmation of this in saying (1 Cor. xi. 26, 28), "As often as yet eat this bread and drink this cup.....Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread." Surely, if changed into the Lord's body, St. Paul would not have called it bread.

Other arguments might be brought forward, such as the miracle involved, and the means by which it is worked ; but it is hoped that enough has been said to show that in the Lord's Supper we receive, as the Church of England puts it, "God's creatures of Bread and Wine."

Consubstantiation, or the joining of the two substances, is, in fact, refuted by the same passages, as they prove that the bread and wine remain bread and wine without change ; but one or two further proofs may be added on this point. First, it involves confusion, as the entrance of one substance into another of a different nature must be confusion ; and Luther's idea of the fire and the iron being blended is not a case in point, as the being red-hot is an *effect*, not a substantial existence. Such confusion cannot come from God ; for, as St. Paul teaches us (1 Cor. xiv. 33), God is not the author of confusion.

Again, if our blessed Lord did in any way come and enter into the elements to be carnally partaken of by us, surely St. Paul would not have said that in partaking of the bread and the cup we did show the Lord's death *till* He come. If He comes in the elements consecrated, surely His coming would not be so expressly spoken of as future ; and St. Peter (Acts iii. 20) says of Jesus Christ, "whom the heaven must receive till the times of restitution of all things" ; and in the 10th Romans St. Paul writes, "Say not

in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above." Again, in the 6th of St. John, where our Lord speaks especially of living and feeding on Him, when the audience would have interpreted His words literally, He says "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." So, then, neither by change of substance, nor mixture of substance, can there be any corporeal presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

That there is no objective spiritual presence is also the clear teaching of God's word. And on this most important point, let us clearly distinguish between *an objective presence in the elements* and a *subjective presence in the Sacrament*. The Sacrament is not complete till it is rightly received, and the spiritual presence of Christ is not in the elements, but in the heart of the receiver.

If there is an objective presence it must be partaken of by all who receive that sacrament; and Jesus says (John vi. 57), "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me"; and "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." Are we to suppose, then, that Judas Iscariot, who partook of the Lord's Supper, shall live for ever? Are we to believe that all partakers are in this position? How does this agree with St. Paul's words, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to

himself"? Observe where our argument leads us. If there is an objective spiritual presence in the elements, independent of the heart of the receiver, then every one that feeds on the bread and wine feeds on Christ; and Christ says, that every one that eateth Him shall live by Him. So (if there is this objective presence) every one that partakes of the Lord's Supper shall live by Christ. Are we prepared to believe this? Again, our Lord says to His Disciples, just after this, "If any man love Me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Christ abiding with His people, then, by His own showing, depends upon their love for Him, and not upon their partaking of His spiritual presence in the consecrated elements. If, however, we were to adopt the notion of an objective spiritual presence, and were to believe that this followed on the words of consecration, we should look for some allusion to this in either the Consecration or Thanksgiving Prayer. But turning to the Communion Service in the Church of England, what do we find? A commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ; a recapitulation of the history of the institution of the Lord's Supper; a statement that we receive God's creatures of bread and wine; and a prayer that we may be partakers of Christ's most blessed Body and Blood. If there were an ob-

jective spiritual presence, the partaking of Christ would be a matter of course, and there would be no need to pray for it. There might, indeed, be a prayer for Him to enter the elements; but not a petition that as we receive the *creatures* (not the *Creator*) we may be partakers of Him. The thanksgiving, perhaps, sets the truth in even a stronger light, for it says, "We heartily thank Thee for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ." Could anything be plainer than this? The partaking of the spiritual food being limited to those who have duly received these holy mysteries.

Though not strictly connected with the subject, a word may not be out of place here on the connection between the institution of the Lord's Supper and the discourse of our Lord, already so often referred to, in the 6th chapter of St. John. Many try to prove that the eating and drinking therein spoken of refers, by anticipation, to the Lord's Supper. But can we really believe that such distinct statements as (v. 56), "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him," could refer to an ordinance not introduced till two years afterwards? Can we really believe that the words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son

of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," were intended to apply to the Lord's Supper, and so make salvation impossible without partaking of it? Still more, can we believe that the words, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life," are to be explained of that feast; especially when our Lord adds, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"? Surely, the most simple and obvious way of explaining the bearing of the passage on the Lord's Supper is to look upon John vi. as teaching in *word* what the Lord's Supper teaches in *act*—the need of living on Christ and His word. The chapter teaches the deep spiritual truth; the ordinance is a memento of, and a means of carrying into practice the truth therein taught.

The doctrine that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice is one which is closely allied to Transubstantiation, and springing out of it. The Profession of the Council of Trent says on this point: "I further profess that in the Mass is offered unto God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead"; and, "If any shall say that in the Mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God, let him be accursed."

The remarks before made on the connection

between the Lord's Supper and the Passover apply here. In the very manner of its institution we find the typical sacrifice abolished, and the commemorative feast alone retained; but, more than this, it would be insulting, and limiting the work of our Blessed Lord, if we in any way regarded a sacrifice as necessary or even possible. The whole of the spirit of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows the impossibility of repeating His sacrifice, especially chap. ix. 25, 26: "Nor yet that he should offer Himself often; but now once, in the end of the world, hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." And again (x. 14): "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." To believe in a repeated sacrifice is to believe in the imperfection of the sacrifice of Christ.

But some say that the Lord's Supper is not an actual sacrifice, but a presenting one already offered. Surely that can only be done by Him who has offered it; and to profess that we do this is to doubt the perfection of His priesthood, who maketh constant intercession for us.

The only sacrifice we offer in the Lord's Supper is the spiritual offering of prayer and praise, and the living sacrifice of our bodies, for which St. Paul beseeches us "by the mercies of God." (Rom. xii. 1.)

The question of adoration also depends upon

the belief in the objective presence of our Lord. The note at the end of the Communion Service of the Church of England is very clear on this point; saying, on the question of kneeling: "It is hereby declared that no adoration is intended or ought to be done, either unto the sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or unto any corporeal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred by all faithful Christians); and the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one." Moreover, when St. Paul speaks (1. Cor. xi.) of the sin of irreverence in partaking of the Lord's Supper, there is not one word of adoration, which there, if anywhere, would be found; and the reason is plain, for adoration of that which does not contain Christ is IDOLATRY.

But a question frequently occurs as to the necessity of receiving the Lord's Supper fasting. This also arises from the idea of an objective presence; but it is difficult to see how such an opinion can be in any way supported, as the institution was *after supper*; and in 1 Cor. xi., St. Paul even blames those who

come to that Supper hungry, and directs that such should eat at home. All such teaching is a form of superstition, and far removed from the simplicity of the Gospel.

V. A lecture on such a subject would be incomplete without some mention of the uses and responsibilities of the Lord's Supper. There is a special use in this ordinance to *non-communicants*. It is a speaking sign eloquently silent. The preparations for the Communion, disregarded by so many, convey a warning and a memento for which we must give account. Whenever the "fair white linen cloth" is spread, it reminds us of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and it seems to say to each who turns the back on the Lord's table, "will ye also go away"? When these preparations remind you of your Lord's death for you, of His knowledge of your forgetfulness, and His divinely-ordained commemoration feast, will you slight that recollection? When the bread and wine, which are to be eaten as signs, remind you of your Lord's words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," will ye go out into the world and try to live without Christ?

The uses of the Lord's Supper to *communicants* have been already touched on, but we may here, as it were, gather them up. It is a means

of strengthening faith. How came such an ordinance into being? Is not its very existence a proof of the truths it symbolises? Does it not speak more forcibly than words of the truths on which our lives depend? Then it is a token of the personal character of faith and practice. The personal reception of the symbols, the hearing the words our Lord used, applied personally and individually to ourselves, must lead us to look on Christ and His religion as a personal thing. We receive no benefit in the Lord's Supper from seeing another partake, or being near some other communicant; the benefit depends on the personal, believing reception. And this tells us how it is of no use to be a child of godly parents, a companion of godly people, an attendant on religious services, but we must personally and each for himself embrace Christ, feed on Him, and grow in Him. And, as we have seen, this ordinance is a special means of feeding on Him, one divinely appointed, and one which, if used in faith, cannot fail to be the channel of blessing. Again, its use is to draw communicants out of themselves, to remind them of their profession and of their bonds one to another in Christ, to lead each to live in the life of others, to rejoice in the communion of saints, and to look forward to the coming of the Lord.

The Lord's Supper, moreover, involves responsibilities.

First, the responsibility of *use*. The ordinance is given and explained to Christ's people—can they neglect it? Left as a legacy by the Saviour, made even a request of His, "Do this in remembrance of me"—can any who love Him refuse it? Offered as a means of remembrance to His forgetful people, tossed about, crowded, and harassed in this busy world, where there is so much to make us forget and so little to make us remember—can any slight it? It is not only a gift, but a talent, for which we shall have to account.

Then there is the responsibility of *self-examination*. The whole benefit, as we have seen, depends on the worthy or unworthy reception; and this involves thought, examination, and preparation. We must come in true repentance, faith, and love, if we would realise the blessings God bestows. It is most important that we should thus examine and consider our ways; and indeed it may be said that this is not only one of the responsibilities, but one of the uses of the Lord's Supper.

Again, there is the responsibility of *reality*. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself," or condemns himself in the act. What can be more impious than to profess to commemorate the death and sacrifice of one in whom we do not believe; to pretend to feed spiritually on one for

whom we have no care, and no love; to profess a personal communion with God and with His people, when we have no real interest in either the one or the other? Surely, this unreality, not discerning or thinking of the Lord's body, is one of the most fearful mockeries that can possibly be conceived; one of so flagrant a character that we can well understand the judgments which St. Paul speaks of as called down by it on the Corinthian Church.

In closing our thoughts on the Lord's Supper, we cannot but be struck with the strife and controversy that have arisen about it; and we must feel, moreover, that the thing which should have been for our help has, through our ignorance and unbelief, become to us an occasion of falling. Moreover, we may notice that in all the unscriptural ideas on this point there is a great deal of complexity and mysticism, theories which are not well connected, and statements which are difficult to account for; while on the other hand the Scriptural account is plain, easy, credible, and simple. Let us study simplicity more. God's law is simple: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." Christ's gospel is simple: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The life of the Christian is simple: "Ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your

bodies and with your spirits which are His.” The Sacrament, which recalls our profession and strengthens our practice, is simple: commemorating the sacrifice of Jesus; betokening the need of personal clinging to Jesus; affording the believer a means of spiritually feeding on Jesus; binding together in one communion all the followers of Jesus; causing each to show the death of Jesus—TILL HE COME.

Superstitious Bondage and Gospel Freedom.

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THE first and second Commandments in the Decalogue stand in a remarkable relation to each other, which relation is often entirely overlooked. The first Commandment deals with the *object*, the second with the *manner*, of worship. The first forbids the worship of any false God, the second forbids the worship of the true God in a false way. The first is directed against idolatry, the second against superstition. These two sins are closely allied, and they include between them the attacks that have been made against God and His truth throughout all time. Idolatry in its gross form is condemned alike by reason and civilisation; and we find that, as a rule, whenever its fetters are thrown off, superstition steps into its place and takes up the combat. The attack is made no longer by an open foe; but, under the garb of Christianity, the very ground and essence of faith is undermined, and the soul, believing it is

being brought near to God, is really removed far from Him.

The subject now before us is the contrast between the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and human superstition—the one being *freedom*, the other *bondage*; and we may express this view under the following proposition: That the only freedom of man is in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that human intervention tends only to bondage.

This proposition we will proceed to examine: (1,) Logically; (2,) Historically; (3,) Scripturally; (4,) Practically.

I. It will be necessary first to define the expressions used. "Superstition" may be called "addition to what is already complete." It is literally a placing over, or laying something upon another; and the lectures which have already been given show how modern superstition is placed over the truth so as virtually to hide it. Thus, the already complete work of Christ on Calvary is covered over with masses, intercessions, indulgences, purifyings, till salvation, by the blood of Jesus only, is utterly hidden and put out of sight.

"Freedom" has been well defined by Jansenius: "To be free," he says, "is to be independent of others, to have one's cause in one's self; liberty has only itself for its end, hence the

greatest possible liberty is that of the Supreme End, that is of God."

Bondage, of course, is the very opposite of this: it is the loss of independence, and having for one's end the will of others. This is exemplified by the lower creation, which is employed for man's use, bought and sold, killed or allowed to live at the will of the owner, fed, housed, named, used, treated well or ill according to the master's pleasure. This is bondage.

Another expression should be explained before passing on, namely, "human intervention." This is not to be confounded with "human aid": intervention means coming between two parties, and so human intervention, in the sense now spoken of, would mean "man stepping between man and God." We may aid each other in coming to Christ, by preaching, teaching, and living, but we cannot stand between God and our fellow-sinners.

That the only freedom of man is in the Person of Christ, and that all human intervention tends only to bondage, may be proved logically *from the very nature of Liberty*. We have just said in the words of Jansenius that to be free is to be independent of others, having one's self as one's end, and therefore the highest liberty is that of the Supreme End, that is God. Now it is very clear that if the highest liberty is the liberty of God, the more we partake of the

nature of God the greater will our liberty be; for our wills will be merged in His, and our life will be a part of His, so that to please Him will be to please ourselves. But we can only be one with God through Christ, our means of access and our mediator; while, on the other hand, all human mediation and human means of access is only thrusting something else between us and God, and removing us further from Him, and therefore from liberty. This argument, that of finding our highest liberty in God, is expressed by our Blessed Lord (John xv. 7), "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." What can be greater freedom than this? but it is to be found in Christ alone.

Again, our point is also proved *by the position of God and man*. Man is the offender, God the offended one; and the only covenant that can exist between them is the covenant of *grace* in which God gives all, and man takes all. If then, God's covenant is of grace, it knows no fetters, no conditions, no merit: for grace is free, and all who are under grace must be free also. Then all conditions, impediments, and interventions are fetters to freedom, and tend only to bondage.

The freedom of the Gospel, and the bondage of Superstition, may be illustrated also by the *motives recognised by each*. The Gospel works

by love, telling men of what Christ has done for them, how He has borne their penalty, satisfied the law, and fulfilled righteousness for them; and calling on them for the sake of the mercies of God to serve Him. Superstition, on the other hand, works by *fear*; it only tells of what must be done before we can get to God, how we are to procure this and avert that—it is entirely on a different footing, having none of that “perfect love which casteth out fear.” He who works by fear is a slave, always trying to avoid some evil or punishment; but he, whose motive is love, rejoices in freedom and longs to pay his reasonable service.

II. But we pass on to view the contrast between Superstitious Bondage and Gospel Freedom, historically; and we shall find that whenever truth has asserted itself most clearly, then Satan has tried to bring men into bondage by means of *Superstition*. We can do little more, at present, than sketch the merest outlines of the history of superstition; but in all ages we may detect its presence, either in symbolism, formalism, human intervention, or human merit. Symbolism is the bringing in a visible sign to represent the invisible object of worship; formalism is the dependence on outward form, rather than inward worship; human intervention is the bringing in between God and man

any human mediator besides Jesus Christ; human merit is the claiming of God's favour, not freely, but on account of works done or to be done. By these four means, Satan has tried to fetter and cover up the truth and freedom of man's redemption ever since the fall; but we may also say roughly, that symbolism and formalism were the most prominent forms of superstition before our Lord's time; human intervention and human merit prevailed during the early and middle ages of the Christian era; while in later days, as though the end were at hand, all four forms combine to fetter the liberty of the Gospel.

The notion of worshipping the unseen God by symbols began in very early times and led to idolatry, in which the world in general was wrapped; but we have to do with it only in its connection with God's own people, to whom the gospel freedom has been shown, by promise and type ever since the fall. Rachel, in patriarchal times, we find (Gen. xxxi. 19) stealing the images that were her father's, though Laban himself professed a belief in Jehovah. Then, after the bondage in Egypt, Israel longed for a visible God, and made the golden calf to represent The *Lord*. Again, on entering into Canaan, we find several traces of superstition, all of which Joshua set before Israel, when he gave them their choice of their God. In the time of the

Judges, *symbolism* seemed to have grown into idolatry; as, although Jehovah was nominally worshipped, the scriptural mention of Chemosh, Baal, Gideon's Ephod, and Micah's Teraphim, all give abundant traces of the degenerate religion of Israel. Then follows a fearful state of superstition in, and after, the reign of Solomon. Jeroboam's calves being followed by professed worship of Baal; and though still the feasts were held, and still the fasts were kept, the worship of the true God was lost in simple idolatry. Then notice Isaiah's protest against *formality*: the new moons and the appointed feasts; the calling of assemblies, the treading of the courts; all the bondage of outward ceremonial was to be found, but no real service, no real life, no real love. Then followed the Captivity; and after that, symbolism, in a measure, gave place to form and human merit. The synagogue, the reading of the law, the broad phylactery, the tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, the public and long prayers, the strict fasting, and the ostentatious alms now mark the Pharisee; whilst the beginnings of asceticism, voluntary humility, vows of poverty, and other forms of self-humiliation are traced to the Essenes.

It was at this time, and in consequence of the formal and human element in superstition, that *tradition* began to assert itself; and this during

the life of our Lord on earth was carried to such an extent as virtually to neutralise the Word of God, on which it professed to be built. An instance of this is brought forward by Christ Himself, who mentions the Corban tradition as superseding, in the teaching of the Pharisees, the fifth Commandment. The spirit of that commandment required that the son should tend, support, and maintain the parent in old age; but the Pharisaic tradition allowed him to dedicate his goods to the service of the sanctuary by a gift called Corban, and so to free himself from all filial duties and obligations.

The scribes, too, were very active and eager in teaching the letter of the ceremonial law, with their own additions; and, in consequence, their disciples became like whited sepulchres, with a slavish obedience to externals, but the hidden man of the heart was far from God. When at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ was fully preached, we find a vast growth of superstition springing up at once among the early Christians. There was first the formal superstition of the Judaising party, who said that except men were circumcised they could not be saved, that they must still keep the law of Moses, and obey the very letter of the ceremonies. Of this St. Paul speaks, when he says to the Galatians, "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Then there were the human superstitions of the Philosophical party, bringing in other mediators between God and man, angel worship, closely-defined laws as to meats, human merit, human power, value of good works, and other doctrines of a like nature. The bondage of human intervention is especially treated of in the epistle to the Colossians; human merit is refuted in those to the Romans and the Ephesians. Asceticism, too, began to reach great lengths, and in the post-apostolic ages formed quite a marked feature in Christian history. The Stylites or "pillar hermits" are well known by name in ecclesiastical history, as well as those who lived in caves and pits; and while we are on the subject of *real* asceticism (as opposed to modern monasticism), it may be well to show, from the language of one of the great supporters of this system, how great and how useless was its bondage. Jerome, who was a bitter ascetic, says thus: "O how often have I thought myself to be in the midst of the vain delights and the pleasures of Rome even when I was in the wild wilderness." "I, who, for fear of hell, had condemned myself to such a prison, thought myself oftentimes to be" indulging in pleasures of various kinds, "when I had no other company but scorpions and wild beasts. My face was pale with fasting, but my mind was inflamed with desires in my cold body;

and although my flesh was half dead already, yet the flames of fleshly lust boiled within me." It is unnecessary here to enlarge upon the heresies of the Gnostics, the Arians, the Eutychians, Nestorians, and others, as they directly opposed the truth of the Gospel, rather than founded superstition upon it. Our purpose will be best served by tracing the growth of superstition in the Church of Rome and the Church of England. During the Apostolic times St. Paul tells us the mystery of iniquity was already at work, which was to end in the revelation of the "man of sin;" the way was prepared for human intervention by angel and demon worship; false views of martyrdom followed; and then a struggle for ecclesiastical supremacy. When Christianity became popular, and the Pontificate of Rome became an office of worldly renown, slowly and surely the claims of the Popes increased, till in the year 756, Zachary, the Pope, claimed and exercised the Papal Supremacy over the universal Church, and over the kings of the earth. Meanwhile, the new religion had in Rome assimilated very much to the ancient idolatry. The worship of the "Mother of the Gods" was transferred to Mary "Mother of God." The Pontifex Maximus was merged into the so-called "Christian" Pontiff; many of the processions, rites, and ornaments of heathenism were transferred to

the so-called "Christian" worship; and thus with an infallible Church, an infallible Pope, worship of Mary, mediation of Saints and Angels, we find superstition reigning and "the man of sin revealed."

Look now at the Church of England. We have seen in a former lecture that, after the time of the Norman Conquest, Justification by Faith in Christ alone was taught as its fundamental doctrine: which was proved by the Visitation Service used in the time of Anselm. That Transubstantiation was not held by it at that time, is proved by one of the Public Homilies used in the tenth century, in which these words occur: "The body in which Jesus Christ suffered, and the Eucharistic body, are widely different. The first was born of the blessed Virgin, and consisted of blood, bones, nerves, limbs, animated with a rational soul; but the body which we call *eucharistic* is made up of several grains of wheat. It has neither blood, bone, nerve, limb, nor soul in it. We are, therefore, not to form any corporeal idea of it, but to understand it wholly in a spiritual sense." Elfric, Archbishop of York, about the beginning of the eleventh century, writes thus: "The Eucharist is not the body in which our Saviour suffered for us, nor the blood he shed for our sakes; but 'tis the same body and the same blood spiritually." England long resisted the

supremacy of the Pope, and it was not till the twelfth century that his power was recognised and established, and then the superstition of human intervention covered the whole of the Western Church. Observe the bondage that followed, and its rapid stages. In the twelfth century, Justification by Faith alone was denied; Transubstantiation was decreed at the Lateran Council as an article of faith; and exaction and persecution became the order of the day during the Pontificate of Innocent III. In the year 1414, at the Council of Constance, "Communion in one kind only" was ordered, or, in other words, the cup of the Lord was denied to the lay people. Throughout the fifteenth century, human merit was the special form of superstition. Indulgences, founded on man's merit, purchased by man's money, were sold throughout this country and the continent of Europe. Tetzel, the great agent in this unholy traffic, stated, as we have heard in another lecture, that as soon as the money tinkled in his box the soul was freed from purgatory. This traffic in Indulgences, this superstitious bondage, called forth Martin Luther, the champion of Gospel freedom; and in consequence of the doctrines of the Reformers, we find the dogmas of the Church of Rome systematised and reduced to a regular scheme by the Council of Trent, in 1545 and following years. The

decrees of this council are remarkable for their damnatory character, the repetition of the words, "let him be accursed," contributing to the idea of bondage rather than of freedom; and we must remember that the Catechism of the Council of Trent is to the Church of Rome very much what the Thirty-nine Articles are to the Church of England. At the same time, measures were taken not only for disseminating and systematising the dogmas of the Church of Rome, but also for their compulsory reception. By the advice of Cardinal Caraffa, a Supreme Court of Inquisition was established in Rome, and the four rules on which it was instituted speak volumes on the question of superstitious bondage:—

First, "That in matters of faith one must not venture upon a moment's delay, but the most energetic measures must at once be taken, on the slightest suspicion presenting itself."

Secondly, "No deference must be shown to any prince or prelate whatever, however exalted in rank."

Thirdly, "Much rather must they be persecuted with the utmost rigour who shall endeavour to avail themselves of the protection of a potentate; on nothing short of confession should lenity and fatherly compassion be shown in dealing with an offender."

Fourthly, "People must not degrade them-

selves by any sort of toleration for heretics, and particularly for Calvinists."

To such an extent was the Inquisitorial office carried at this time that a contemporary Italian writer (Antonio dei Pagliarici) says, "Hardly is it possible to be a Christian and to die in one's bed."

This principle of persecution lighted the fires of Oxford and of Smithfield; and never did superstitious bondage more thoroughly betray itself than when Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, and Latimer laid down their lives for the freedom of the Gospel of Christ. Why were these men burnt? Why did they resist the great power of Rome? We are told sometimes that the Reformation was a mistake; but the one grand cause of our Reformers' martyrdom was their determination to oppose all human intervention, and human merit, and everything which came between the all-needing sinner and the all-sufficient Saviour. The succeeding era, comprising the reigns of Elizabeth and the Stuarts, was not so much marked by the superstition of human intervention and merit as by that of formality; and as we have seen that symbolism led to *idolatry*, and man's merit and man's intervention to fearful *cruelty*, so formalism led to *corruption*, and as the church in our land was thus enslaved and corrupted, the Puritan divines arose and asserted the simplicity and the free-

dom of Gospel truth. The reign of James II. was a conflict between a Protestant country and a Popish court—a steady stand against Romish aggression. The press was the great organ of defence; and its use in the hands of Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Prideaux, Whitby, and other leading men of both Universities, moulded the national mind and brought about the Bill of Rights, the Act of Settlement, and the Protestant Constitution of the Realm. But another period of mere outward form, mere letter of religion, followed, until towards the end of the last century—men's minds being bound with the form without the life.

At that time Blackstone, the celebrated lawyer, went from church to church in London, and testified of each that he could not hear more Christianity in any sermon than was to be found in the writings of Cicero. But, though men's hearts were bound and fettered by formal superstition, the Word of God was not bound, and He raised up such men as Whitefield, Wesley, Romaine, and Venn, to preach the free and unfettered Gospel of the grace of God. Thus arose the great Evangelical body, one which has increased in spite of bitter opposition: one which has never been popular with the world, but still the body to which, under God, is to be attributed the revival of religion.

Such a blow to bondage has, however, been

met a corresponding revival of superstition. The Tract writers began it by endeavours to reconcile the teachings of Rome with the teachings of the Articles; thus, the seeds of priestcraft being sown, there has arisen what is called an Anglican Revival, which sneers at the name of Protestant, and brings in the four great forms of superstition—Symbolism, Formalism, Human Intervention, and Human Merit—to darken the clear truth of Gospel freedom. As there is a movement from within in our Protestant country to return to the yoke of bondage, so there is a strong attack from without. Rome is directing her forces upon England, as we may gather without much difficulty from the words of Archbishop Manning, who says that “England is the key of the whole position of modern error”; and truly that position must needs be a strong one. Attacked from without and betrayed from within, there is great danger of the Church of England relapsing into bondage—a danger which is to be, which will be, overcome, if each individual Christian will “stand fast” “in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

III. We come now to the scriptural proof of our proposition, and we shall find it in the *Types*, the *Prophets*, the *Gospels*, and the *Epistles*. Abraham’s two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, are ex-

plained by St. Paul in the fourth chapter of his Epistle to the Galatians, as referring to the two covenants, the law and the Gospel. Those who are under the law, fettered by superstition, are spoken of as in the position of Ishmael, the child of the bondmaid; and it is no doubt in reference to the two sons of Abraham that our Blessed Lord said (John viii. 35), "The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever." Hagar and Ishmael were bond-slaves and were cast out: Isaac was the son of promise, and remained sole heir. Thus those who seek salvation by forms or work of the law are in bondage, "born after the flesh:" they are not in Christ, they are tied and bound by human merit, and by the chain of their sin, from which no amount of legal ceremonial, no deeds of the law, can ever set them free. Turn to the Prophetic writings, and there we find, the setting the captive free is one of the great features mentioned in the work of the Messiah. Thus (Isaiah lxi. 1), "He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." This verse our Lord applies to Himself in His discourse at Nazareth, recorded in the fourth chapter of St. Luke; and, again, Hosea gives us the same thought, saying (chap. xiii. 9, 14), "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thy help. . . . I will ran-

som them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." Many other instances might be given of the way in which the prophets represent man as having enslaved *himself*, and Christ, the Messiah, setting him free.

But this is still more clearly shown in the Gospels, where the subject of Superstitious Bondage and Gospel Freedom forms a main feature of one of our Lord's discourses. He says (John viii. 31) to those Jews which believe on Him, "If ye continue in my Word then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." This was said to those who were Abraham's literal descendants, those who had all the rites, ceremonies, and conditions of Jewish ritual; so astonished were they at the need of being made free that they said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, ye shall be made free?" Jesus points out that fettered by legal observances, serving through fear, they were in the condition of bond-slaves, while the only freedom was to those who were sons; and, He adds, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Here, then, we have the matter stated in our Lord's own words: the only real freedom for us is that which we realise in the Son of God.

Very clear also is the teaching of the Apostles

on this point. When the Pharisees who believed tried to compel the Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses, Peter spoke up boldly on the matter and said (Acts xv. 10), "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear. But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." What can be stronger than this? How clearly it forbids all human intervention or encroachment on the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The great doctrinal epistles also, those to the Romans and the Galatians, are full of this contrast. The Apostle Paul, when he has established the fact of Justification by Faith, proceeds to show the consequences of that doctrine in the sixth and eighth chapters of the Romans. He says (vi. 17—18), "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness"; and (ver. 22) "Being now made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Here, then, we have St. Paul distinctly showing that the form of doctrine which was delivered to the Romans, or in other words, the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ, was the only means of freedom. Again, in the eighth chapter of the same epistle and the second verse, he says, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death"—hath made *me* free. Recall for a moment who it is that speaks: a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the righteousness of the law blameless; and yet, before he received the knowledge of Christ—before he accepted His salvation—he was not free, he was bound in superstition; a bond slave, with no will, no power of his own, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made him free. In the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians we find the contrast of which we are speaking still more plainly set forth (verses 3 and 4), "We, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"; and (verse 9), "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, wherunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days and months, and times and years"; and (iv. 31, v. 1), "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith

Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." St. James's Epistle is very full of the same thoughts, speaking of the Gospel as "the perfect law of liberty," and bidding Christians to speak and so do "as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." And the same free course of action is spoken of by St. Peter when he says (1 Peter, ii. 15, 16), "So is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God."

Before leaving this part of our subject, it may be well to gather up some of the scriptural teaching on the point of man's free access to God through Jesus Christ, without the aid of symbols, forms, human intervention, and human merit. The grand principle is taught in such expressions as (Matt. xi. 28), "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; and (Heb. x. 19, 20), "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us,.....let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." The needlessness and sinfulness of symbols to aid our approach to God is shown in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, 15, 16, "Take ye therefore good heed

unto yourselves ; for that ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire : lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure."

The danger of reliance on outward forms and observances is the subject of one of our Lord's discourses to the Pharisees, recorded in the seventh chapter of St. Mark, in which He quotes the words of Isaiah, saying, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me"; and, speaking to the Samaritan woman on the sacredness of places, he says, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.....But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth : for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit : and they that worship Him must worship Him in the spirit and in truth." (John iv. 21, 23, 24.)

Human intervention between God and man is forbidden, and shown to be impossible, by such passages as (1 Tim. ii. 5) : "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." And (Rev. xxii. 8, 9), "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am *thy fellow*

servant.” Of human merit, and its powerlessness to mediate between God and man, we have spoken in a former lecture. One blessed verse telling of the freedom of God’s grace, and the powerlessness of man’s merit, may suffice in this place (Eph. ii. 8, 9), “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.”

IV. The bondage of superstition and the freedom of the Gospel has so far been considered by the light of *Reason, History, and Scripture*. It remains that we should consider the point *practically*, or in its connection with our own lives and worship. The four forms of superstition which we have already noticed are to be found in some measure in every heart, and especially at the present day.

Symbolism asserts itself in many ways: it is to be traced whenever we seek the aid of something seen to draw our thoughts and hearts to Him who is unseen. This is the essence of the Romish Ritual, and of that *excessive* Ritual in the Church of England which is no inapt imitation of it. The priestly vestments, which profess to typify the offering of a sacrifice for the quick and dead, are instances of this form of superstition: when we are taught to behold in the garments of the minister types of purity, of the yoke of the Gospel, of

the girdle of truth, and the garment of righteousness, besides in certain cases "a special shining garment over all,"* do we not see in these fancies so many fetters to the soul. When we are assured (as we *are* assured by many) that we cannot rightly administer the Lord's Supper to a sick person without the presence of each or all of these garments, superstition has made more than a *little* progress. I would distinguish, however, most clearly between a garment worn, on account of decency and from long use, as the mark of one *officiating or performing a duty*, and garments employed, as is the fashionable explanation, to *symbolise truths*. We have the truths spoken clearly enough to our own hearts by God Himself: what can be the need of symbols to come between us and Him?

Again, the use of incense to typify prayer, the paraphernalia employed to symbolise the presence of our Lord on the altar (so called), the calling in the aid of sense to bring acts and objects of worship before our perceptions, and, as it were, through them to our hearts, are all so many forms of superstition. There is, moreover, another symbol most commonly and most painfully used in the present day, which demands a special word: it is the common custom of wearing the *cross* in some form or other. It is

* "The Priests' Prayer Book," pp. 13-18.

either made of no value, treated as an ordinary ornament, and so *irreverently* used; or looked upon with a species of awe as something more than ordinary and possessing a special character, and thus *superstitiously* used. Let us watch against the first traces of symbolism; or allowing anything material—picture, image, scene, vestment, or cross—to come between us and our personal intercourse with God. These are so many *fetters*, when God offers us free, unconstrained access through Jesus Christ.

Then notice the practical view of formal superstition. We must never forget the special blessings attached to gathering together in God's name; we must never ignore the injunction that "all things be done decently and in order." We must not pass over the fact that in the earliest days there were divers orders in the Church; or that we have, independently of our Lord's prayer, distinct traces in the New Testament (Acts iv. 24), of a form of prayer and liturgical worship. We must bear in mind that, in the earlier days, circumcision, and in Gospel times, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, were ordained by God Himself; but here we must draw the line, we must be most clear on the point that there is no virtue in the *form*, for then comes in superstition. Sacredness of special places, special vessels, special offices, sanctifying power attached to the words of

man, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost limited to human agency, all these are traces of formal superstition and bonds imposed by man on the free grace of God. Although there are special directions for the "assembling of ourselves together," let it ever be borne in mind that the prayers in the family circle, in the room, by the bedside, reach just as truly, through the merits of Jesus, to the throne of God as those offered in the grandest pile of architecture, amid the most elaborate and accurate ceremonial. Let us recollect that if we make God's grace depend on the number of services we attend, or the number of sacraments we receive, we fetter His love and power by man's barriers of form. If we believe that acceptance depends upon the way such a service is conducted, instead of on our own heart's relation to God, we are falling into the same error. If we attach importance to bowing in this direction, or turning in that, so that it becomes a serious question to us whether in such ways a man is doing right or wrong, we are wrapping ourselves in superstitious bondage. Let us not care whether we turn to east or west, north or south, or whether others do what we do not, so that all be done decently or in order; only let us turn our hearts to the Lord.

But one of the most important practical features of superstition is human intervention, man

thrusting himself between man and God. The highest form of this is the assumption of infallibility by the Romish Church and by the Pope, who, "as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. ii. 4.) The Bible to be accepted only as interpreted by a self-asserted infallible church; the traditions of that church considered as of equal authority with God's word; that church the only channel of salvation, the only commissioned medium of conveying the will of God to man; these are some of the chains with which men try to bind the Gospel. Other forms of the same superstition are the dogmas that no unbaptised person can be saved; that the reception of the Lord's Supper is *absolutely* necessary to eternal life; that those who dissent from the Established Church are lost. Can we believe these things, which are so plainly repugnant to the Word of God? But the most terrible form of human intervention is the *confessional*, in which the priest puts himself in the place of God; requires the penitent to give an account of his or her sins; adjudges a penalty, and pronounces pardon. How different is this sacerdotal confession from what St. James means by confessing our faults one to another, and from the ghostly counsel and advice which the Church of England suggests. How can any allow themselves to be in such bondage as to be compelled

to confess sins to a fellow-sinner; to trust their conscience to another's keeping; or to believe that he has the slightest right to pronounce penalty or pardon? Beware of human intervention. Listen to the Word of God as preached by His ministers, and compare it, after the manner of the Bereans, with Holy Scripture; attend and thankfully receive the ministrations of public worship and sacraments; seek the counsel of those whose life is spent in studying the Word of God and teaching His will to others; but avoid attributing the slightest power to human beings. They can only show the way. We have straight and immediate access to God Himself through Jesus Christ; let us put nothing in the way of it.

Human merit is, perhaps, the commonest form of superstition that we meet with in practice. From the Romish doctrine of penances, indulgences, and good works, to the practice of founding our hopes on our uprightness and respectability, the principle is the same; but, oh, what bondage it involves! When gospel truth tells us that all is done for us: our debt paid, our pardon completed, our sins covered, our salvation secured, and *ours the moment we believe*, what bondage is it to drag in a whole catalogue of good works as intermediate steps between us and that which is already our own. Christ has done all for us; and if we believe this

really, and not only in theory, we cannot help doing all we can to show our love to Him; not to make Him love us, for we love Him *because* He first loved us.

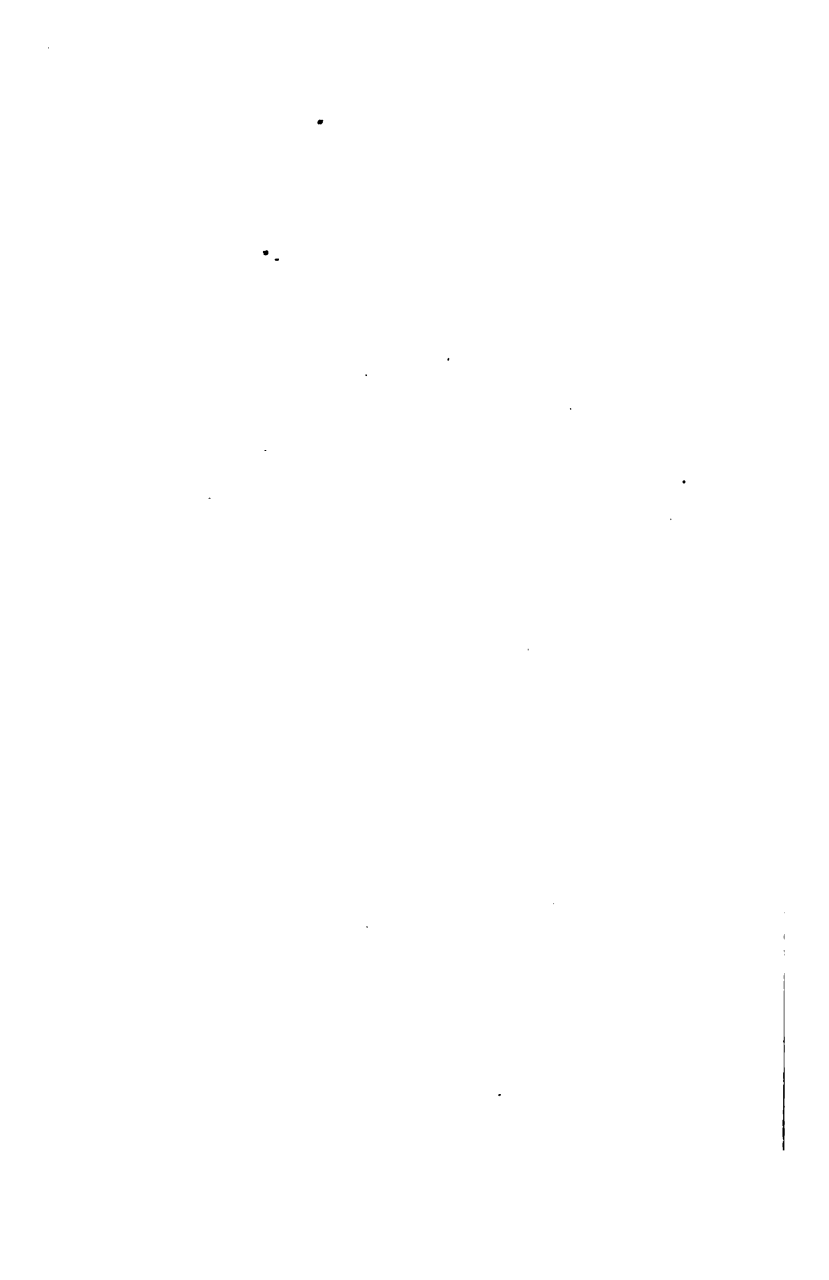
But what a contrast is there in the Gospel freedom. If we believe the plain teaching of Scripture, we know that our sins are our very title to the salvation of Jesus: that He has done all for us; that His work is accepted, and we are accepted through Him; that, instead of waiting till some future time for salvation, we may claim it through Him now; that we may bring every thought and feeling and want to Him at any moment; that we may come boldly and trustfully to the Father through Him, without any intercessions, human or angelic; that He is not to us a consuming fire, but a God of Love. Then, as to the life, the one who has thus accepted salvation in Christ becomes part of Christ. Christ's will is his will, Christ's time is his time, Christ's home is his home, Christ's life is his life, Christ's strength is his strength: as St. Paul says to those who are in Christ, "All things are yours." Is not this liberty? Watch yourselves, then, that you do not throw away this liberty. Let no man beguile you of your reward. Let no symbol, form, fellow-sinner, or human merit come between you and Him, of whom it is said *Christ is all*.

I cannot close my share of these lectures on

the Protestant Faith without personally appealing to every reader, and asking each to examine the character of his faith and practice.

The Word of God is the only Rule of Faith. Is it your rule; do you know and follow that rule; is it your life, your guide, your standard? Justification, or our righteousness in God's sight, is by faith only: do you care about being righteous in God's sight; have you faith in the death of Christ for you; and does that faith show itself in works befitting a Christian life?

The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's death, a token of personal, spiritual life, a means of spiritually partaking of Christ: do you rest your hopes on His death? Do you feel your individual need of daily living on Him in Spirit? Do you cling to the one act which that sacrament commemorates? The Gospel of Christ is perfect freedom; all man's invention and intervention is simple bondage. Do you allow anything earthly to come between you and Christ? Oh, watch against the beginnings of superstition in your hearts; watch against the beginning of the infusion of Rome's poison in your midst; watch yourselves when you find yourselves ashamed of Gospel expressions and Gospel simplicity. "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein."



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